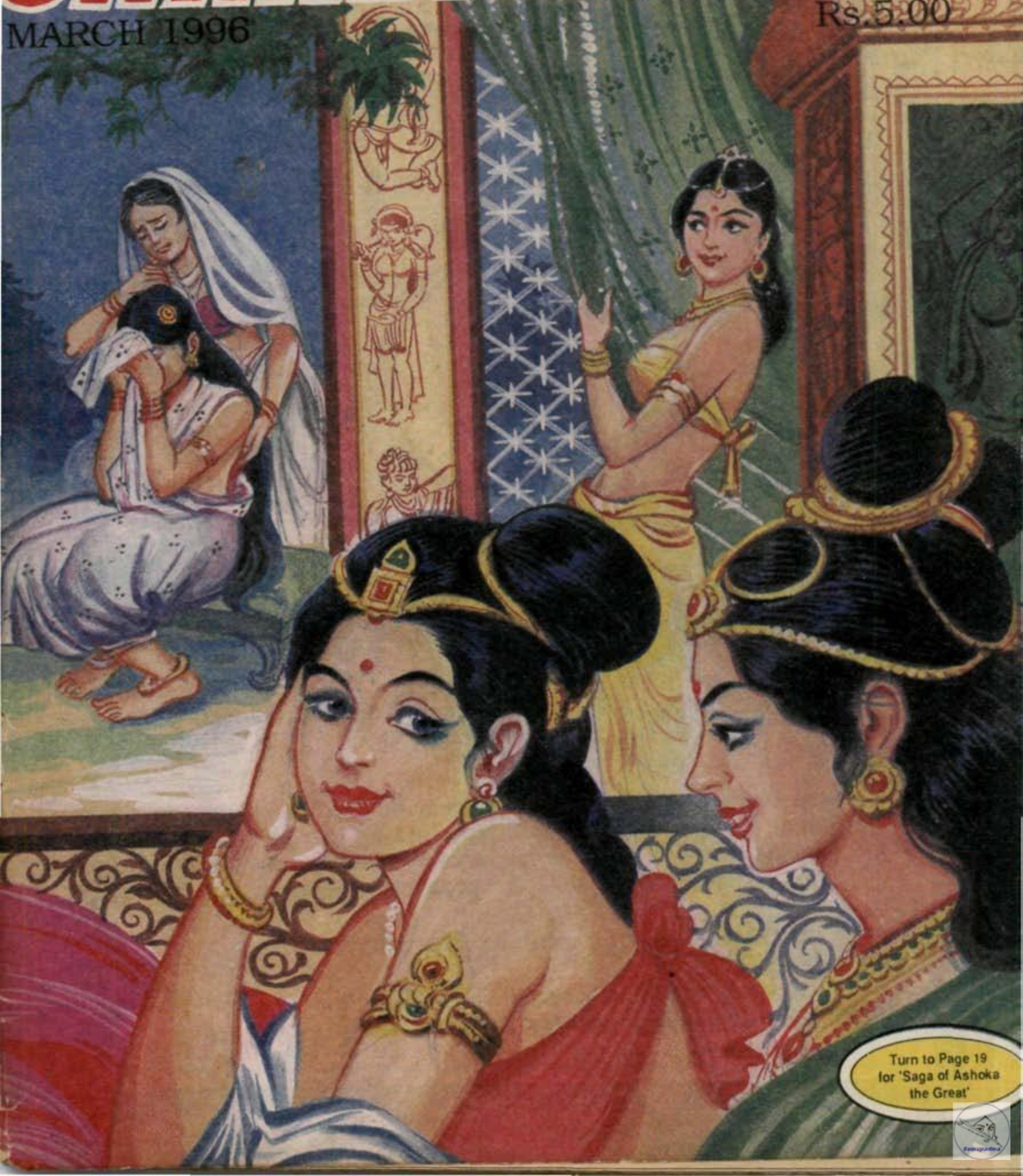


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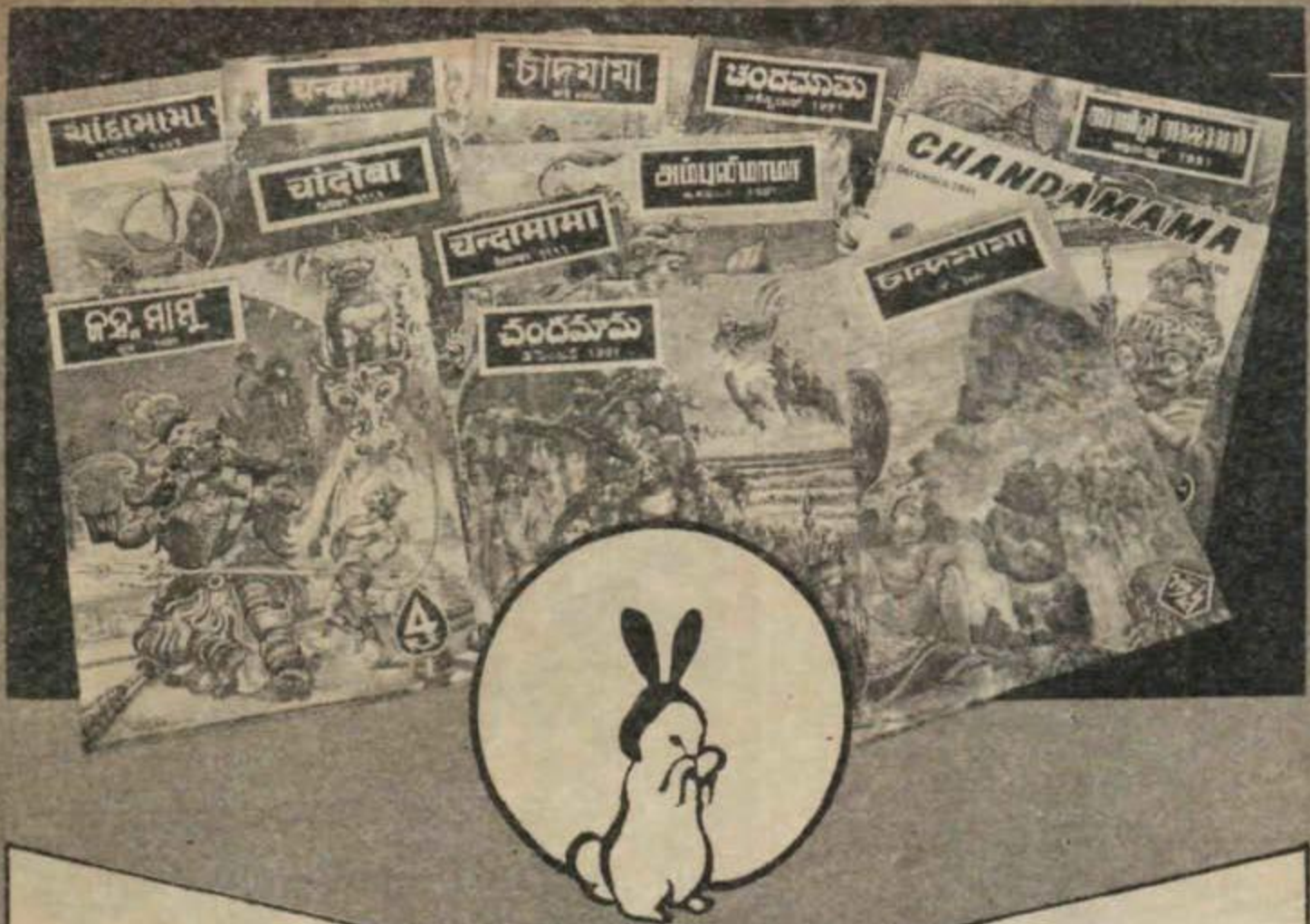
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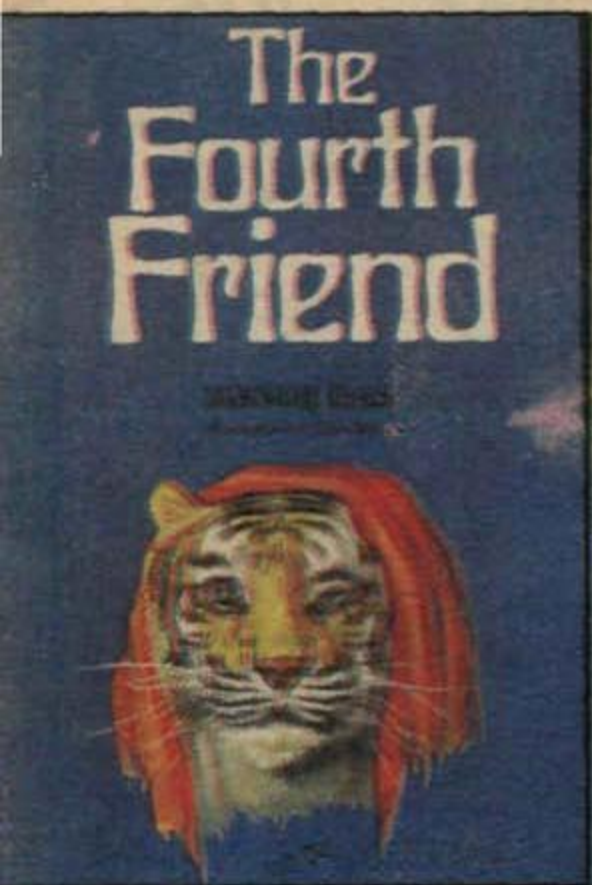
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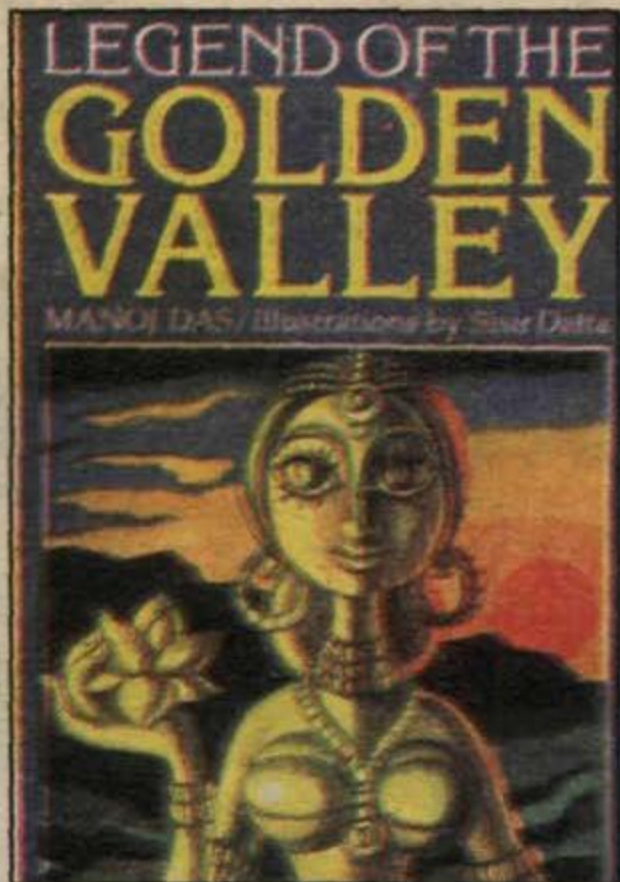


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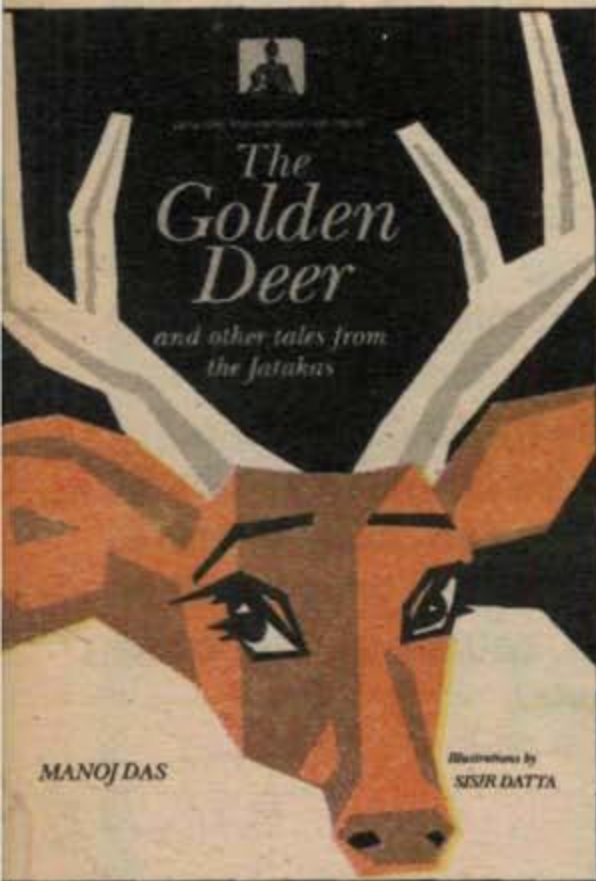
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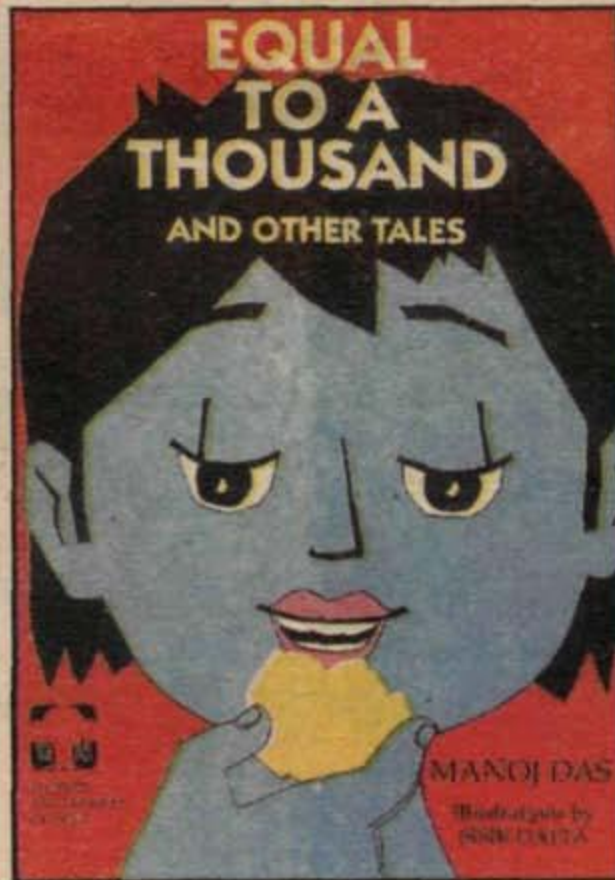
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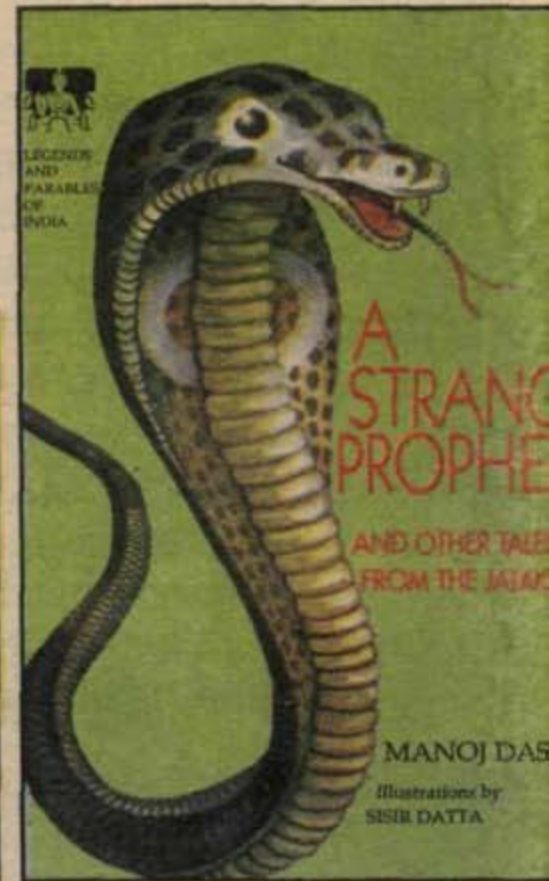
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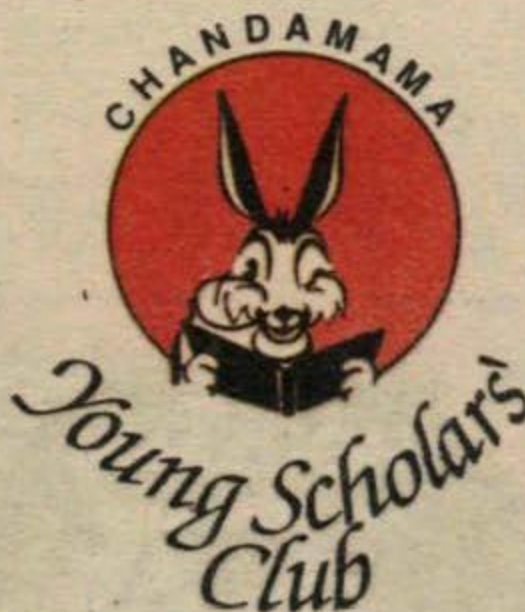
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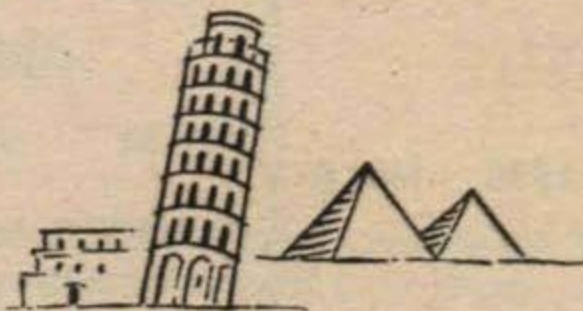
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And News Flash, Let Us Know and More!

NEXT ISSUE

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GOLDEN HOUR : A new feature to mark the Golden Jubilee of Chandamama, to keep you busy with fun and entertainment, and some knowledge, too, during your holidays. Four pages in colour containing quiz, teasers, and puzzles.

PANCHATANTRA : You have been reading this comics in colour for more than five years, each of the five '*tantras*' lasting almost a year. In the 64th and last instalment, the story-telling guru Vishnu Sharman sums up the teachings in the Panchatantra for the benefit of the three princes.

ROYAL TREATMENT : King Ratnasen of Ratnapuri loves hunting. While hunting, one day, he is attacked by a tiger. Ratnasen kills it, but is overcome by remorse when its cub grieves over her dead body. The king takes the cub to the palace where it grows. Suddenly, the little tiger is taken ill. The medicine to cure it is available only in a kingdom where the ruler is inimical to Ratnapuri. How does Ratnasen get hold of the medicine?

PLUS : another instalment of **COASTAL JOURNEYS**. and **CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT**.

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Facing Examinations

Some thirty-forty years ago, annual examinations in most parts of India, used to start around the middle of March. One would often hear people quote Shakespeare and say: "Beware the Ides of March" – though it was a warning by the soothsayer to Julius Caesar (in the famous play by that name). That the great conqueror met with his end at the hands of those who till then had posed as his friends is beside the point here. The play (and history, too) tells us how Caesar took the warning very casually.

These days, come March and a majority of students writing their final exams take similar warnings—though not in so many words—seriously and almost become a wreck days before they go to the examination hall for the very first day's test. But why should this happen? The students invariably are given 'study leave' for a fortnight or longer prior to the examinations, which should be more than enough time to prepare for tests covering eight or ten subjects.

What is really needed is a proper planning for revising these subjects. The emphasis is on the word *revising*. After all, the subjects and individual topics covered in a subject are not strange to the examinees, who must have been listening to what was being taught in the class during a whole year. The students have only to revise with the help of text-books and notes, and recall what they have already learnt.

If they have not been diligent during that one year, they have only themselves to blame. Yet, the situation can be retrieved by appropriately making use of the pre-exam preparation time.

To all those who are appearing for their final or public examinations, here's to wish them Best of Luck!

A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

A PRESIDENT FOR PALESTINE

The youngest nation in the Arab world, Palestine got its first President, when Mr. Yasser Arafat was chosen Ra'ees (Rais) in the general elections held on January 20. Along with him was chosen an 88-member Council, in which his party, Fatah, won a comfortable majority.

Abdul Rehman Arafat Al-Khudwa – to give his full name – was an engineering student in Cairo University and hardly 20, when he saw his kinsmen, the Palestinians, being driven out of their homes following the formation of Israel in 1948. He came under the spell of Arab nationalism, and rather than constructing houses as an engineer, he was more interested in building a homeland for Palestine. He formed the Palestine Liberation Organisation and ultimately became its Chairman.

He started with guerrilla attacks on the usurpers, Israel, which branded him as world's Number One terrorist. Later he waged direct war on Israeli forces and gained some victories which drew many supporters for Fatah. Palestine was given the status of observer in the U.N. In 1974, Mr. Arafat addressed the General Assembly. It is said he carried a gun on his shoulder and an olive branch in his hands.

"Don't let this olive branch fall from my hand," he declared.

Both Israel and the PLO refused to recognise each other, and the war continued. Some countries came forward to mediate between them, as a result, in his address to the General Assembly in 1988, Mr. Arafat announced his willingness to recognise Israel.

The Palestine Authority was created in 1993 and the PLO and Israeli leaders were brought to the negotiating table. On September 29, 1995, Mr. Arafat and the

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres signed an agreement. Israel began withdrawing from some of the occupied territories, like the West Bank and the Gaza strip where Palestine control was re-established.

It is in these territories elections were held to bring back a democratic set-up after a gap of thousands of years. Jericho, in the West Bank, was the world's oldest human settlement, dating back 9,000 years. A 72-year-old grandmother, Mrs. Samiha Khalil, was put up against Mr. Arafat. She polled about 10 per cent of the votes against Mr. Arafat's 88 per cent. It appears she forgot to mark her ballot paper, but was allowed to open her envelope and indicate her choice!

Leaders of Egypt, which was in the forefront of bringing the PLO and Israel closer, feel that the elections were a step toward an independent Palestine.





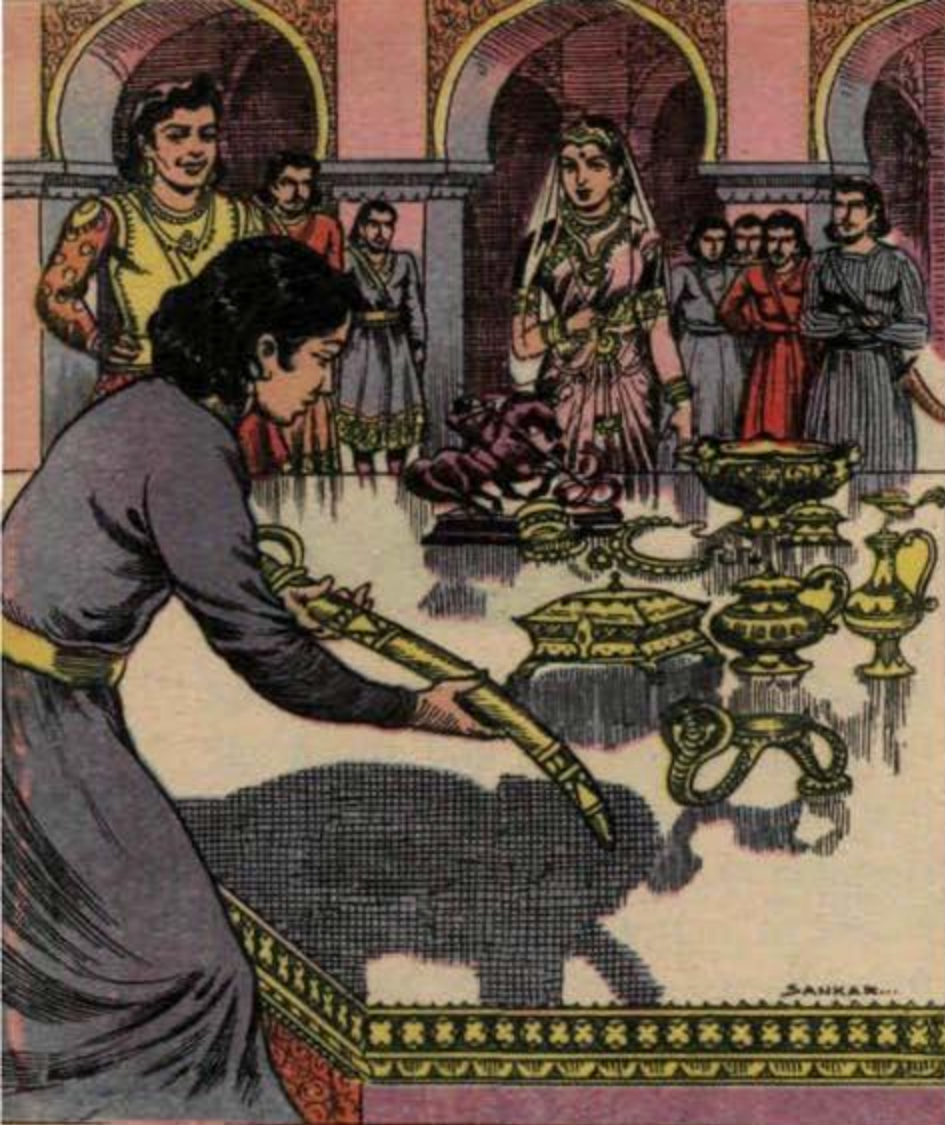
The Surprise Gift

Manimala was the daughter of the ruler of a small kingdom. He was not prosperous enough to think of a wedding for her with any pomp and pageantry. So, he avoided inviting proposals from the princes of the neighbouring kingdoms. He merely announced a *swayamvara* ceremony, where the girl would make a choice after listening to the accomplishments and achievements of each suitor. Every one of them had to make a token payment to attend the ceremony. The money thus collected would be sufficient to perform the wedding, the king cleverly concluded! That was the only way out.

He arranged for the *swayamvara*. The announcement was made in such a way that the news spread far and wide. Only then would many suitors assemble, paying the 'bride-price'. Soon, the procession of eligible princes started. One of them,

Balaveera, surpassed everybody else in the paraphernalia and entourage that accompanied him. His father, Banaveera, was a cruel king, and the rulers of many kingdoms had suffered harassment at his hands. So, some ten of them conspired to waylay Prince Balaveera, to prevent him from being present at the *swayamvara*. But Banaveera's spies alerted him at the proper time, and he caught all the conspirators and released them only after extracting a lot of money from them. After that Balaveera's journey did not meet with any hindrance.

Prince Satyasheel came from a less affluent kingdom. His horse looked famished, and he wore a dress that was wrinkled all over. This was because his father was one of the kings captured by Banaveer and who had to part with his meagre wealth to secure his release from captivity.



Satyasheel, at one stage, even hesitated to go for the *swayamvara*. But his absence would have affected the prestige of his kingdom. So, he went.

Before the princes actually went about making her choice, the suitors were expected to take part in some physical contests. The arena for this was got ready and Princess Manimala, her father and mother, and all royal guests took their place to watch the princes vying with each other. In many of the events, Balaveera came out successful. Prince Satyasheel was not far behind. He was able to excel over quite a large number of princes in several of

the feats. At last, he came face to face with Balaveera. Unfortunately, by then his poor horse was dead tired and it slowed down in speed. Satyasheel had to concede victory to Balaveer.

Later, in the evening, they all assembled in the marriage hall. One after the other, the princes went up to Princess Manimala and placed in front of her the gifts they had brought for her. The gift from Balaveera was easily the richest. Satyasheel had not brought anything special. So, he took out his sword. "This is the most precious gift that I can present to you, O Princess," he said.

"You could not defend yourself with that sword!" remarked Balaveer loudly. "How could you then claim that it is anything precious for you? You may throw it away!" he added with a sneer.

"We did not fight on equal terms, remember that, Balaveera!" said Satyasheel. "My horse was too tired to stand the strain and it was to save its life that I conceded victory to you. I'm ready for another fight!"

The contest next day was a hunting trip. Balaveera and other princes rushed toward the forest to come back quick with whatever game they could get. Satyasheel did not want to

tire his horse. So, he went rather slowly, and was way behind everybody.

Without anyone's knowledge, Princess Manimala, too, had started for the forest to watch the princes a-hunting. But as they had rushed forward, she could not catch up with them. So, she decided to return to the palace. It was on her way back that she came upon Prince Satyasheel. She was happy in seeing him. "Why, aren't you interested in hunting?" she asked him.

"No, not that I'm disinterested," explained Satyasheel. "I don't want to tire my loyal old horse."

"Is that so?" the princess said. "In

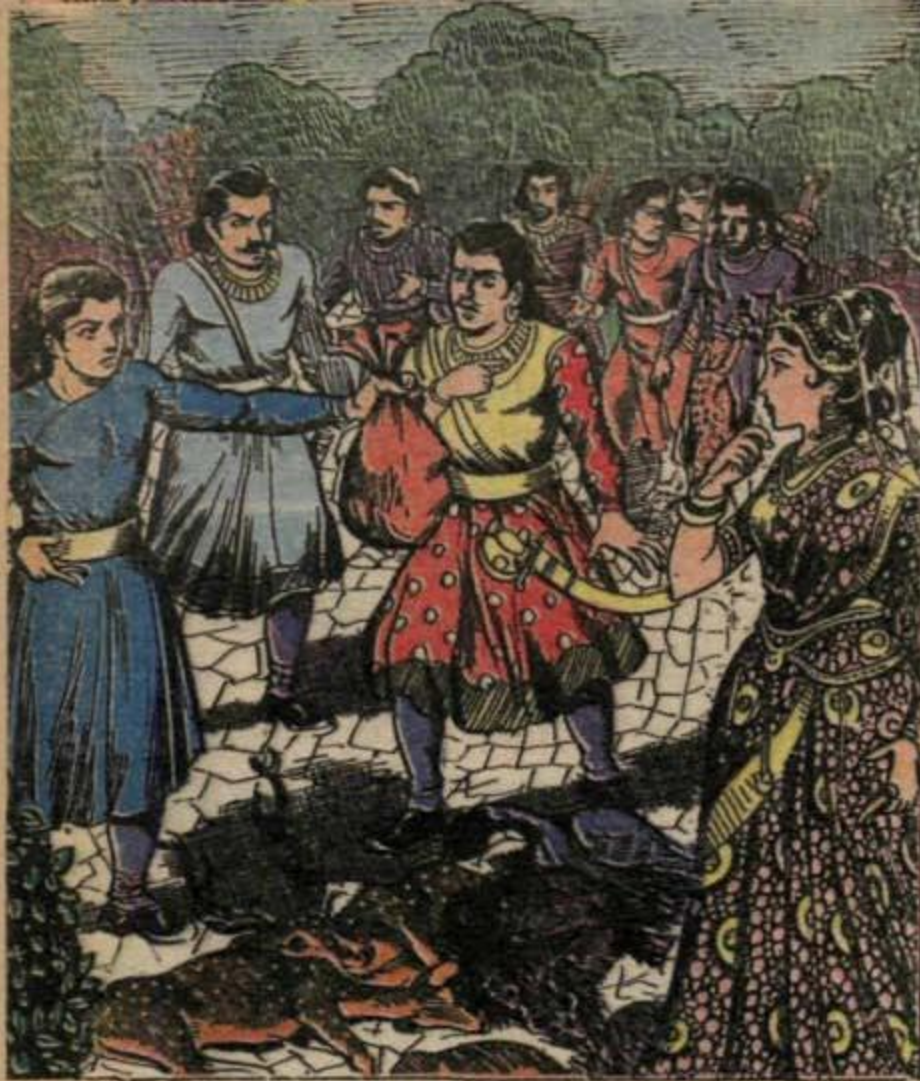
that case, you take my horse and go. I shall take back your horse."

"This horse has served me for many years," said the prince. "I won't forsake him; he's my most precious possession. I won't give him to anybody."

"Remember, you gave me your sword!" Manimala reminded him, while a smile played on her lips. "At that time, you said the sword was the most precious thing you had with you. Was it a boast or a lie?" She then galloped away.

After they all returned from hunting, the princes assembled once again in the hall, anxious to know the princess's choice. But they were told





that she would take a month to disclose her decision. She was present when they all took leave of her father. She bade farewell to everyone, except Satyasheel. In fact, she did not even look at him. He went back with a heavy heart.

Before he crossed the boundary of the kingdom, he met a shepherd boy. He called him to his side and said, "Please watch my action and then go and tell Princess Manimala." He then drew his sword and killed his horse, saying aloud, "I'm sacrificing you for the sake of Princess Manimala." He then walked back to his kingdom.

A week later, Satyasheel saw a sturdy horse tied in front of his apartments in the palace. There was a note on the saddle. It said: "Everything will be all right." He surmised that the horse must have been sent by Princess Manimala.

One month passed. Once again, the princes assembled to hear Manimala's decision, though everybody was almost sure that her choice would be none other than Balaveer. Therefore, some of them were shocked, and others surprised, when she said in the presence of her father, "I shall marry Satyasheel!"

Balaveer was overcome by anger. "Come on, Satyasheel!" he shouted. "Today we'll go a-hunting, and tomorrow we shall have a swordfight. Let's see who'll win!"

Satyasheel accepted the challenge. The two, as well as the other princes, went to the forest and hunted for a long time. They soon went back with their game. But Satyasheel was missing. They all waited for him. It was time for dinner. Just as they began eating arrived Satyasheel. They all jeered at him. "We all thought you would be leading a cartload of birds and animals! Where are they?" they said, mockingly.

"I didn't go for any bird or ani-





mal!" he said. "However, I got something more prized—a human head!" He then untied a bundle and revealed its contents. It was the head of Banaveer, father of Balaveer. There was stark silence in the hall as though everybody had stopped breathing. But in the deeper folds of their mind, they all felt greatly relieved. "A devil is no more!" They all heaved a great sigh of relief.

Balaveer appeared as if he had been drained of all his strength. Till now he had the backing of his father.

And that had made him arrogant. Everybody stared at both Balaveer and Satyasheel, one after the other. Balaveer did not raise his head to remind Satyasheel of the swordfight. Without uttering a word, he left the place.

The wedding of Princess Manimala and Prince Satyasheel took place with a lot of gaiety and splendour. The other princes did not feel disappointed. They wished them well before returning to their respective kingdoms.

- Better face a danger than be always in fear.
- Learn to be a man of your word. Let your given word be like a hempen cord, a chain of wrought steel, that will bear the heaviest strain.
- Conciliatory manners Command esteem.

You can't do this, you can't do that!

Please let me know the meaning of the expression "Catch 22 situation", writes Prabir, of Bhubaneswar.

"Catch 22" is the name of a novel by J. Heller published in 1961. The book is about an absurd situation in which one can never win, because one will face a choice of courses of action, both of which or all of which would have undersirable consequences. Imagine a situation in which you cannot do one thing until you do another, and you cannot do the second thing until you do the first thing! In short, it is impossible for you to do anything.

Reader Jyotiranjana Biswal, of Durgapur, asks : What is meant by 'larger than life'?

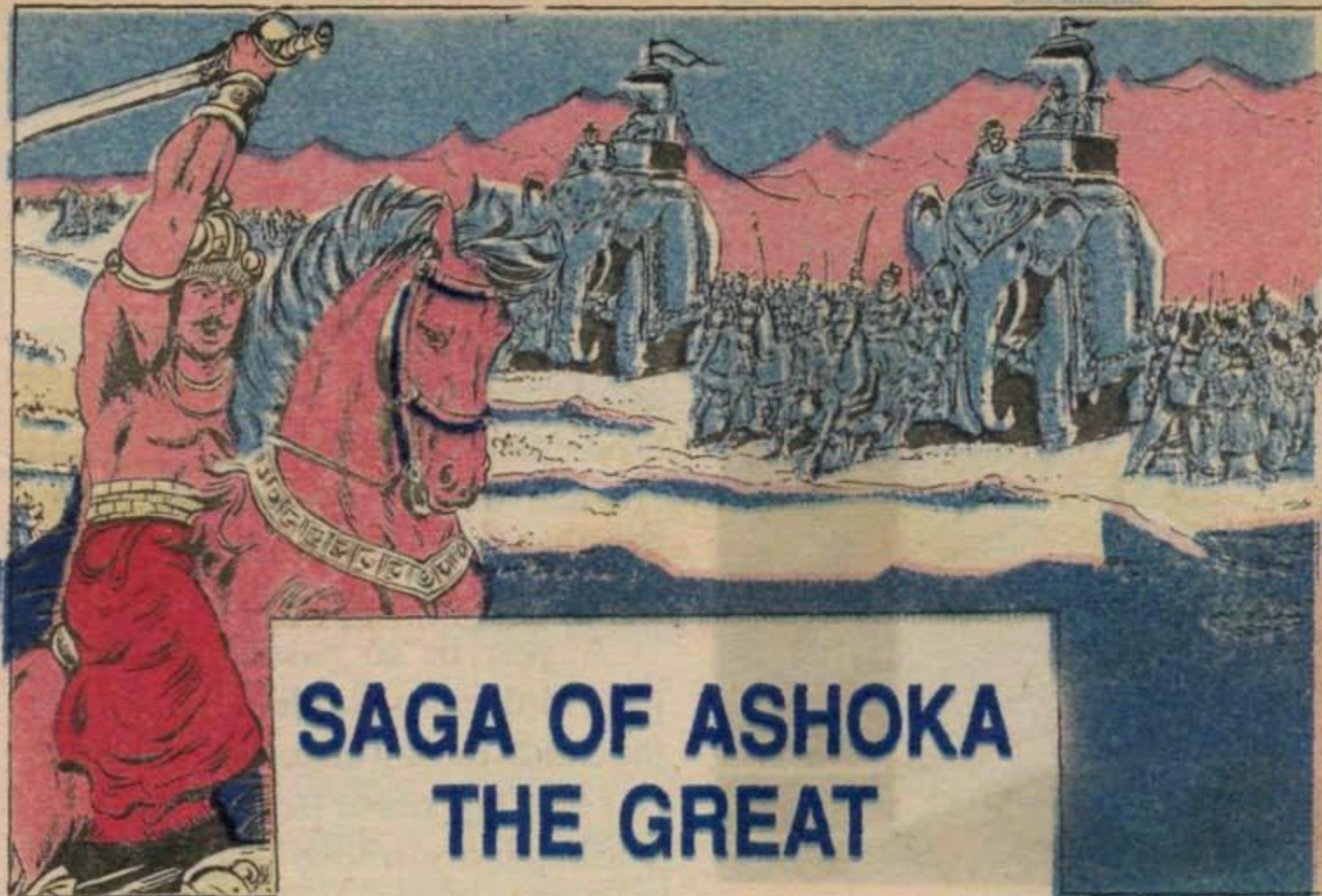
There is an expression "as large as life", to indicate the unexpected or sudden appearance of someone or something. Suppose you are on a ship and suddenly see an iceberg, and you exclaim : "There it is, as large as life!" In simple words, it means actual, or real. So, when you say someone or something is "larger than life", it means that it appears, or he or she behaves, in a way that is exaggerated than usual, actual, or real. Like, when you feel that the hero in a story is "larger than life".

What does the phrase "tear to shreds" mean? asks P. Parameswar, of Kusum Kuhari, Orissa.

Literally, it means tear (something) to pieces, like the machine in offices these days used for shredding confidential papers which should not reach the hands of others. Figuratively, however, the expression means that one criticises others, or their work or behaviour, very severely and thoroughly.

What is 'hunter's moon'? asks C.K. Rangachari, of Myladuturai.

The first full moon following the *harvest moon* is called *hunter's moon*. The moon about the period of fullness nearest to the autumnal equinox (September 22, when the length of the day and night will be equal - like March 21, which marks vernal equinox) is called *harvest moon*.



SAGA OF ASHOKA THE GREAT

The story so far: King Chandragupta founded the Maurya dynasty at Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha. He was succeeded to the throne by his son, Bindusara. In his kingdom lived a poor Brahmin who had a beautiful daughter. An astrologer had told the Brahmin that Subhadra was destined to be a queen. The Brahmin led her to the palace. The king, however, forgot all about her until one day he happened to see her again and decided to marry her.

It was a pleasant coincidence that Subhadra's father was in Pataliputra when the king's wedding was announced. The Brahmin had come to find out what happened to his daughter after he left her in the king's palace.

While walking around the palace, the Brahmin heard that the king's messengers were about to set out for

his town to fetch him to perform his role at the marriage ceremony. He identified himself and was warmly received. As the king had promised, the wedding took place before sunset, at an auspicious hour fixed by the court astrologers.

Subhadra, from a mere palace maid, was elevated to the position of a queen. She was adorned with

2. A TEST FOR THE PRINCES



jewellery and was given a separate apartment and a number of personal attendants.

She ought to have been happy. Alas, she was not. It was because the other queens and elder women of the palace never missed a chance to taunt her. "There goes the beggar's daughter!" one would say to another, pointing her finger at Subhadra. "If Brahmin girls invade the royal households, I wonder why we were born as princesses!" would say another.

What could poor Subhadra do but stomach such insults? The king was too busy with the affairs of his empire

to take note of the intrigues inside the palace. Besides, Subhadra was very shy and humble. She was not of the kind to complain about anything to her husband.

"My child, they're envious of you," an old lady of the palace, who had grown affectionate towards her, would tell her and console her. Subhadra would only smile. But her smiles were always tinged with sadness.

A year or so passed. Subhadra gave birth to a male child. Looking at the child's radiant face, she exclaimed: "At last, my *shoka* (sorrow) is over! The boy is my *ashoka* - the one to end my sorrow."

The name Ashoka stuck on the child.

The senior queens had already given birth to five sons before Ashoka was born. Of them, the eldest was Susima. Everybody looked upon him as the would-be crown prince and the future king. Naturally, the courtiers and officers treated him with caution and respect.

Prince Susima felt highly flattered. He was rude towards anybody who displeased him. He beat up servants and officers. Nobody protested.

Prince Susima was three years older than Ashoka. They were in their teens. One day, when both the princes

happened to be in the garden, the old gardener greeted Ashoka, because he had not noticed Susima who was standing behind a tree.

Suddenly, Susima pushed him down with a cruel blow. "How dare you ignore me?" he shouted.

The old man rose to his feet with great difficulty and, with folded hands, said: "O noble prince, I never meant any disrespect towards you!"

"But must you show respect to this son of a beggar woman?" Susima demanded.

"Mind your tongue, elder brother! My mother is your mother, just as your mother is my mother!" asserted Ashoka.

"Shut up! Neither do I care to view your mother as my mother nor would my mother care to view you as her son!" said Susima with an unashamed air of arrogance.

"It's for you to shut up! Don't forget that we both are sons of King Vindusar! My mother is as much his wedded queen as is your mother! By insulting my mother, you're insulting our father!"

"It's my pleasure to insult you and your mother. What can you do?" said Susima.

"It's my pleasure to extract an apology from you!" answered Ashoka,



taking hold of his hand and giving it a wrench.

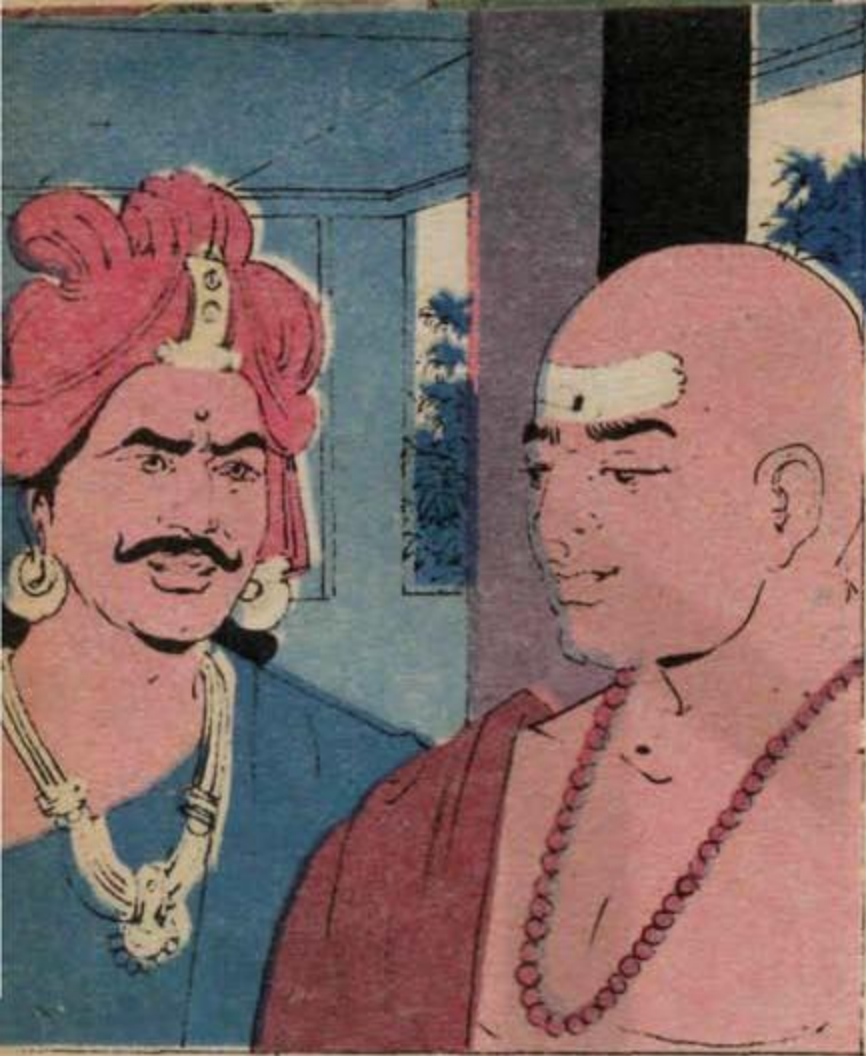
Susima cried in pain. The old gardener rushed out of the garden and called the minister who was passing by.

"Leave him, leave him!" the minister shouted at Ashoka. Ashoka instantly let go Susima's hand.

"How could you do this to your elder brother?" asked the minister.

"I did that because he behaved not as my elder brother, but as a bully. He had the cheeks to insult my mother and my father. Next time he does so, I'll wrench his neck."

Susima left the place in a huff, but



not before casting a furious look at Ashoka. The minister understood that he would never pardon Ashoka.

Chanakya, the clever and capable man who guided Vindusar's father, Chandragupta, to defeat the Nandas and found a new dynasty, continued to be Vindusar's chief adviser. The minister confidentially reported to him the quarrel between the two princes.

"I've a feeling that Susima has gone astray, thanks to the flatterers who surround him. So far as Ashoka is concerned, his character is still in the making. He can grow up to be good; he can also become bad. All

would depend on the circumstances in which he finds himself and the people who influence him," observed Chanakya.

"You're right, sir. But we feel that the king himself is partial towards Susima. The future of the Maurya empire, I'm afraid, is not going to be safe if Susima becomes its monarch," commented the minister.

Chanakya remained thoughtful for a moment. "I think it's time to break the king's illusion about his eldest son."

It was evening, and King Vindusar was enjoying a stroll on the terrace of his palace when Chanakya appeared before him.

Vindusar greeted him with folded hands. "Is there anything urgent, sir?" he asked.

"Not very urgent, but confidential. My dear king, it is time for you to groom one of your sons for the position of the crown prince," said Chanakya.

The king's eye-brows were raised. "Why, sir? Is my eldest son, Prince Susima, not eligible for the position?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. As you know, you're not bound to choose the eldest prince for that position. Whoever proves efficient will deserve it," replied Chanakya.

The king knew that Chanakya was a man of few words. He never expressed his opinion on any matter unless asked. If he was suggesting that the eldest prince would not necessarily be the right choice for the throne, there must be some reason for that.

"Well, dear king, there's no hurry! But it may do the princes good for them to understand that we're keeping an eye on them and that the choice for the position of the crown prince has not been finally made. Even Prince Susima should not take his future for granted, simply because he was born a year or two before the other princes. Meanwhile, we must put the princes to different tests from time to time," said Chanakya.

"Sir, I've never questioned your wisdom. Kindly decide upon the tests to be done," said the king.

"I've already decided. Send word to all the princes, to each one individually, to come to the court of the Siva temple tomorrow at sunrise. Each must reach the spot by whatever he thinks to be the best of vehicles; he must have eaten the most nourishing breakfast, and must sit on the most precious seat," said Chanakya.

Messages were sent to the princes accordingly. Early next morning, King



Vindusar, Chanakya, and some of the trusted courtiers reached the temple before the appointed time. As the sun rose, the princes were seen arriving there.

Prince Susima came riding a bejewelled chariot. Another prince rode an elephant bedecked with ornaments. A third rode an excellent horse. The fourth and fifth princes came in palanquins. At last was seen Ashoka, arriving without any vehicle.

The servants of the five princes placed seats for them in front of the temple. Two had brought with them fine ivory thrones, two others had brought dazzling cushions, and one



had brought a tiger skin. Ashoka, however, had brought nothing. He sat down on the ground. The other princes looked at one another and giggled with derision at Ashoka's conduct. Even the king did not appear pleased.

To Chanakya's questions, the princes described the luxurious breakfast they had eaten. They seemed to have vied with one another in eating more number of special items.

"Ashoka, why didn't you use the best vehicle at your disposal?" asked Chanakya.

"I did use the best, revered sir, for I used my legs. They are the most trusted vehicles," replied Ashoka.

"What did you eat?" asked Chanakya.

"A cup of curd, my revered sir!" replied Ashoka.

"A cup of curd? Had you not been asked to eat the most nourishing breakfast?"

"A mother alone knows what's the most nourishing food for her child at a particular time. Since my mother gave me a cup of curd this morning, I took it without raising any questions," replied Ashoka.

"But what about a grand seat which you should have brought with you?"

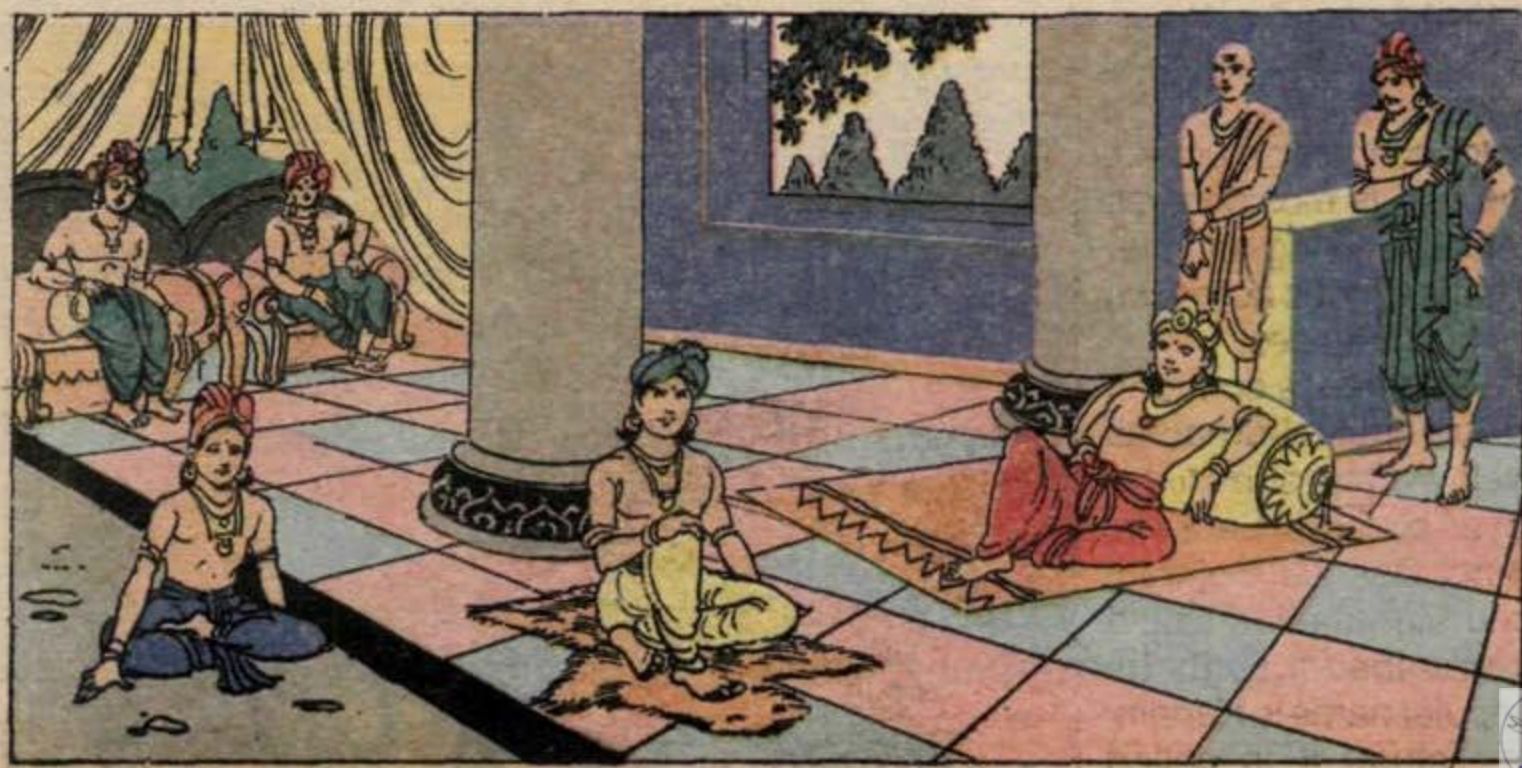
"Revered sir, what can be more precious than the earth?" answered Ashoka. "I chose the earth as my seat!"

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the courtiers who stood behind the king.

Chanakya smiled. "My boy, I congratulate you," he said.

The king looked surprised and happy.

(To continue)



Blessed with long life

There is a story, how Garuda—the mount of Lord Vishnu—was responsible for the long life enjoyed by the Kadamba tree, which is believed to live even for three hundred years. The heavenly bird was once coming down to earth carrying nectar in its beak. While it rested beneath a Kadamba tree, the beak rubbed against the trunk, spilling some nectar on it. The nectar gave the tree long life.

Lord Krishna, when he was young, was fond of the sweet-smelling Kadamba flowers. He used to roam among the Kadamba trees that grew in Brindavan, playing his flute or dancing with the *gopis*. After he left for Mathura and later for Dwaraka, these milkmaids would go and ask the trees, "Tell us, where has our lord gone? When can we see him again?"

The tree flowers before the monsoon starts. They look like golden golf balls. Four to five of them can be seen on a single strong twig. The leaves are a dark green and broad and are shed towards the end of the cold season, so much so, the tree is mostly bereft of leaves during summer. That is why it is not grown as avenue trees.

The tree is common in the coastal areas as well as the sub-Himalayan plains. In Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, and Marathi it is called *Kadamba*, though its popular name is *Kadam*. In Telugu it is called

Kadambamu and in Kannada *Kadawala*. In Malayalam, it is *Attutek* (teak growing near river), and in Tamil *Vellai*.

A popular story revolving round the Kadamba is about the seventh son of a merchant whose habit it was to beat a drum and play a flute beneath the tree that grew in front of their house. Once when the father was away, the six brothers who managed the family business cut down the tree to teach him a lesson. The boy ran away to the nearby jungle. The merchant, on his return, was unhappy, especially because the wealth he had amassed was fast dwindling. The family deity appeared in a dream and attributed his fortune to the youngest son. He went to the jungle and brought him back. The boy continued to seek the company of the Kadamba which now began to grow once again. Fortune also smiled at the merchant's family.



Sages of India

SATYAKAMA JABALA

A river flowed through a forest. On the western bank of the river there was a hermitage. A famous sage, Gautama, lived there with a number of disciples.

Early in the morning the young students of the sage took bath in the river, reciting hymns in honour of the rising sun. They were a happy lot.

On the eastern bank of the river, in a small hut, lived a boy and his

mother. The mother, whose name was Jabala, gathered dry wood and carried them to the nearby village. The villagers gave her rice and milk in exchange for the wood.

Her son, whom she had named Satyakama, bathed alone on his side of the river, but kept gazing at the boys of the hermitage, wistfully. "Mother, I have a strong desire to learn the lessons which those disciples of sage Gautama are learning. What should I do?" one day Satyakama asked his mother.

"Why don't you meet the sage and ask him about it?" suggested



the mother.

Next day the boy swam to the other shore. He stood before the sage and, hands folded, he appealed to him to accept him as one of his disciples.

"What is your caste?" asked the sage.

"Sir, I do not know," said the boy.

"What is your father's name?" asked the kind-hearted sage.

"Sir, I do not know even that. I have always lived with my mother alone."

"Better ask your mother what is your father's name and then come back to me," advised the sage.

Satyakama put the question to his mother. The mother remained silent for a moment and then said, "Look here, my boy, I have worked in several households as a maid. Once I married a man who too served a landlord as I did. But he and the members of our master's family died in an epidemic after a few days of our marriage. I fled the land and have been here since. You were born here. I did not have the opportunity to know my husband's name."



Satyakama went and reported to the sage what he had learnt from his mother. The sage smiled and declared without the least hesitation, "You are, of course, a Brahmin, for, a true Brahmin is one who always speaks the truth."

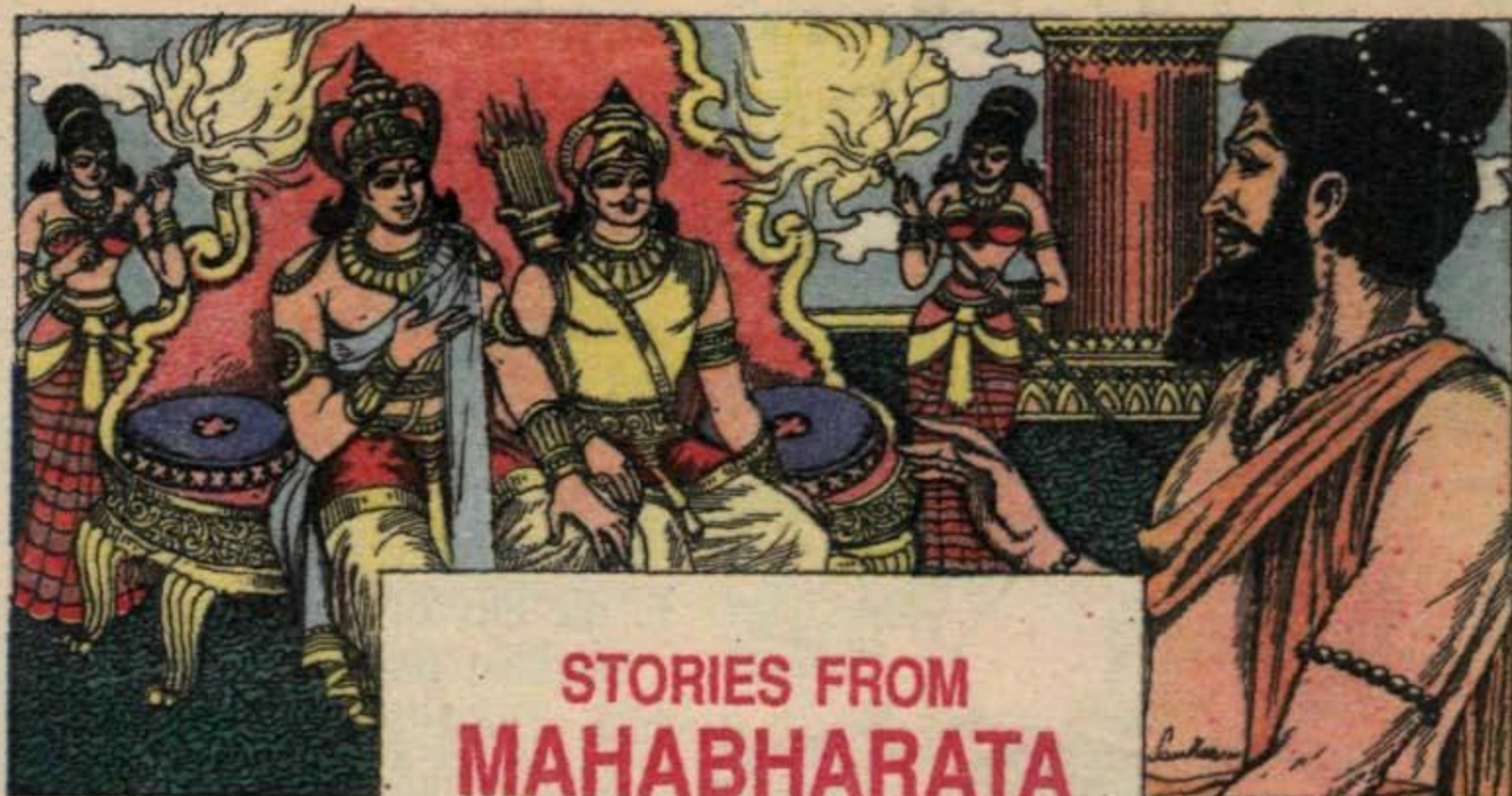
Satyakama – who came to be known as Satyakama Jabala – was accepted as a disciple by Gautama. Soon he proved to be one of his best disciples and later became a great guru himself. His story shows that there was a time when one's caste was determined by one's nature and not necessarily by one's birth.

DO YOU KNOW?

1. What was the previous name of Namibia?
2. Who introduced Christianity in India around 50 A.D.?
3. The famous Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, was not of Egyptian origin. Of what descent was she?
4. Badminton, when it was first played in India, had another name. What?
5. What is the name of the holy book of the Jews?
6. Which is the first polo club set up in India? When?
7. Who was the ruler of Italy at the break of World War II?
8. What award is given to individuals in India for excellence in sports?
9. When was the first Olympiad held? When and where was the first modern Olympic Games held?
10. Which part of India has the most endangered species of mammals in the country?
11. Which are the three basic colours?
12. A Moghul emperor was given the title "Guardian of Mankind" by his subjects. Who was he?
13. When did men from earth hold a meeting in space for the first time?
14. Which was the birthplace of the famous Russian writer, Count Leo Tolstoy?
15. Two American Presidents died on the same day—July 4, 1826. Name them.
16. In which year were the Indian States re-organised?
17. Which is the longest river in Europe?
18. Where is the Railway's Integral Coach factory located?

ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| 10. | The Himalayan region. | 11. | Red, blue, and yellow. |
| 12. | Akbar | 13. | December 15, 1965, between the astronauts travelling in Gemini VI and Gemini VII |
| 14. | Yasnaya Polyana | 15. | John Adams, Thomas Jefferson |
| 16. | In 1956. | 17. | The Volga. |
| 18. | In Perambur, a suburb of Madras city. | 19. | The first Olympic Games was held in Athens in 1896. |
| 20. | South West Africa | 21. | Saint Thomas |
| 22. | Macedonia | 23. | Poona |
| 24. | The Torah | 25. | The Cachar Club, of Assam. It was founded in 1859. |
| 26. | Benito Mussolini | 27. | The Arjuna Award |
| 28. | The first Olympiad was held in 776 B.C. The first Modern Olympic Games was held in | 29. | |



STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far:

The Pandava princes having lost all their possessions in crooked games of dice planned by the Kaurava prince, Duryodhana, are forced to spend twelve years of exile in the wilderness. Sri Krishna, who always stood by the Pandava princes, comes to visit them in the forest. He consoles Draupadi in her distress and gives some sound advice to the Pandavas.

The great sage Vyasa comes to visit Yudhishtira, and advises Arjuna to acquire arms of the gods through penance and worship. Arjuna follows his advice, pleases Lord Siva, who appears in the guise of a hunter, and obtains his blessings and the Pasupata weapon.

Afterwards, Arjuna is taken to the Kingdom of the gods, to pay homage to Lord Indra.

Whilst Arjuna dwelled in the domain of the gods, the sage Romasa visited the place and expressed surprise that an ordinary mortal like Prince Arjuna should be seated so close to Lord Indra.

Indra saw the sage's consternation. "Have no misgivings, for Arjuna belongs to the gods. In a previous birth on earth, he was sage Nara,

when Krishna was sage Narayana. They have taken their present mortal birth to rid the earth of tyranny by the wicked. When you return, tell the Pandava princes that Arjuna is here with us as a guest of honour."

When Romasa went and told the princes the whereabouts of Arjuna, they felt elated.

Meanwhile, at Hastinapura, the



sage Vyasa told the blind king, Dhritarashtra, that Arjuna was visiting the domain of the gods and he had been given invincible weapons.

Dhritarashtra sent for Sanjaya and told him all that the sage had said. "Is this not an ill omen?" he asked with anxiety. "If Arjuna has been given weapons of the gods, then woe betide us. All my sons will suffer through Duryodhana's insane jealousy."

Sanjaya tried hard to find words to console the blind king, but could not, for he too realised that the future would bring nothing but bloodshed and sorrow.

In the Kamyaka forest, some of the sages advised Yudhishtira and his brothers to undertake a pilgrimage, as the time was auspicious. Accordingly, the Pandava princes set out on a pilgrimage, and the first place they visited was the hermitage of Agasthya where, from one of the inmates, they heard this story:

In the city of Manimanth lived two cannibal brothers, Vatapi and Illwala. These two monsters had devised a fiendish plan by which they could rob their guests and destroy them, too. Vatapi would turn himself into a ram and would be cooked into a tempting dish by Illwala. When the guest had eaten this meat, Illwala would shout to his brother to come out of the guests' bodies. Vatapi would then emerge, giving them terrible agony, as their tummies would burst and they would die.

The sage Agasthya visited the two brothers, fully aware of their murderous intent. When he had feasted on the ram's meat, using his great powers, he ordered Vatapi to stay where he was. Illwala, seeing that his trick had failed, became scared for his own life, and begged the sage to take all the wealth the two had plundered in the past and

leave him in peace.

Another story of sage Agasthya went like this:

There was once a tribe of demons called Kalakeyas. They lived at the bottom of the ocean, from where they made lightning raids on both heaven and earth, tormenting and destroying both gods and men. As the gods were unable to attack the demons underneath the ocean, they called on sage Agasthya to help them. The sage dipped the palms of his hands into the ocean and began drinking the water. As he drank on, the ocean sank lower and lower, until it was drained dry. Without the protection of the waters, the Kalakeyas were helpless. The gods descended and slew them.

The Pandava princes visited several other holy places and eventually came to Mount Mahendra, where the sages told them this story of Parasurama:

There was once a monster with a thousand arms called Kartavirya, who massacred people simply because he found great pleasure in shedding blood. One day, he attacked the hermitage of Parasurama's father and dragged away the sage's magical cow. When Parasurama came to hear of this outrage, he



sought out Kartavirya and slew him with his formidable axe.

In reprisal, Kartavirya's sons attacked the hermitage and killed Parasurama's father. This time Parasurama swore terrible vengeance and did not rest until every single member of the Kartavirya tribe was slain.

Resuming their pilgrimage, the Pandava princes came to the sacred lake of Prabhasa, where they were greeted by the Yadavas, led by Sri Krishna and his brother, Balarama. The Yadavas assured the princes that after their twelve years of exile, they would regain their kingdom



even if it meant war against the Kauravas.

After the Yadavas had departed, the Pandava princes crossed Mount Gandhamadana and arrived at the holy Badarikashram on the banks of the river Ganga.

Here the princes rested and bathed in the sacred river. On the seventh day, a rare scent pervaded the air, and soon afterwards a huge scarlet flower with a thousand petals fell before them.

Draupadi was enraptured by this lovely flower and begged Bhima to find the tree so that it could be transplanted in front of their abode in the Kamyaka forest.

Bhima, delighted to do anything for Draupadi, set out to find this flowering tree. His search took him through glens carpeted with wild flowers and over hills bursting with

the song of gorgeously plumed birds. As he wandered along, he sang aloud and his voice echoed through the hills.

Coming to a lake, Bhima gave a great shout of joy and was soon enjoying a swim in the cool waters. Now this was close to the abode of Lord Hanuman who recognized the voice of Bhima.

Hanuman was glad that they were going to meet each other, but decided to play a joke on Bhima. So he lay across the path Bhima would take and lashed his tail on the ground making a noise like claps of thunder. Bhima, wondering what this noise could be, hurriedly dressed and ran along the path to see what was causing such unusual noise.

(To continue)





Janjira to Goa

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artwork : Goutam Sen

South of Janjira, at the mouth of the river Savitri, lies Harihareshwar, also called Devgarh, 'The House of God'. The temples on its beach have made it a pilgrim centre. One of the temples, called the Kal-Bhairav temple has lingams which are believed to have formed on their own. Once every year, the statue of Kal-Bhairav is taken in

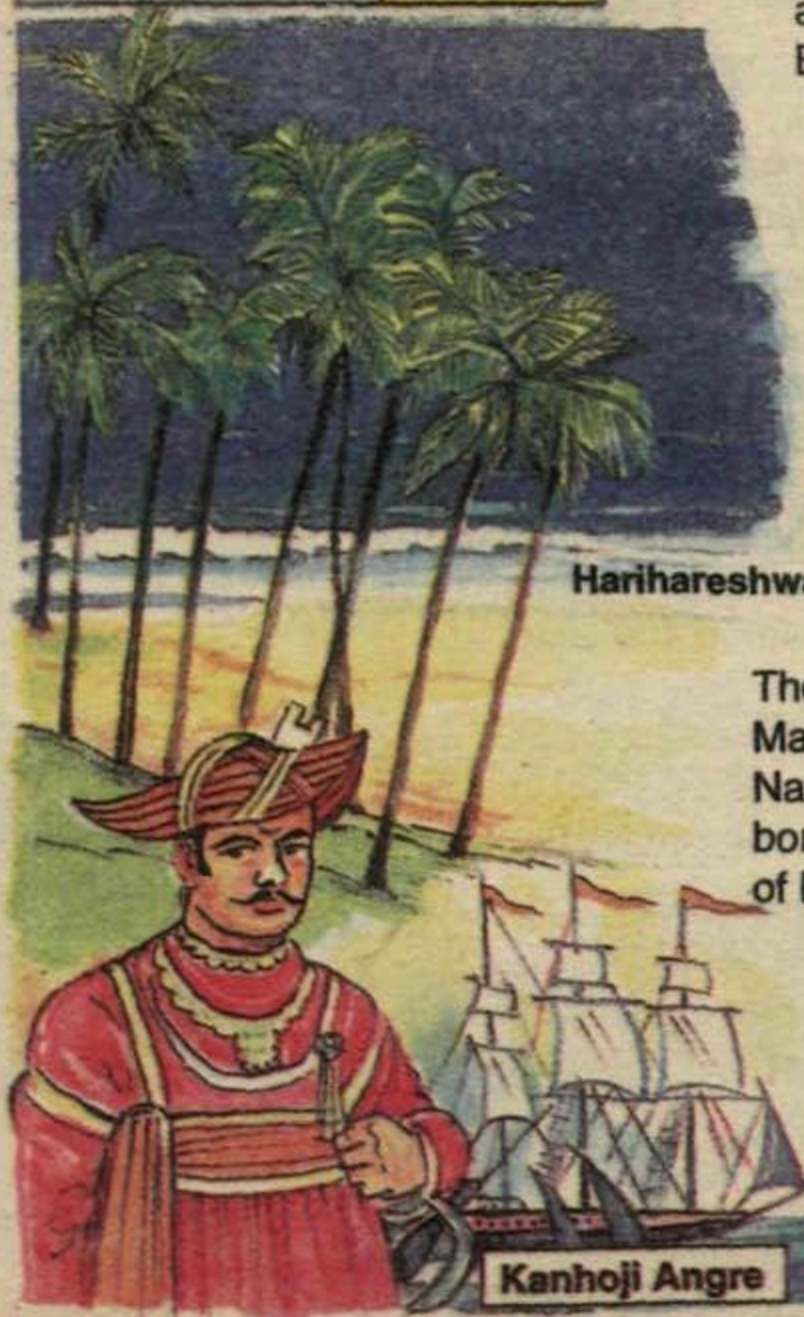
a palanquin to the hills, named after Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and Parvati.

To the south of Harihareshwar lies Bankot. In the 18th century, Bankot's fort became the stronghold of the great Maratha admiral Kanhoji Angre.

In 1756 the Marathas ceded it to the British in exchange for Gheria (Vijayadurg) and it became the first British possession on the mainland of Western India.

Harihareshwar

The well-known Maratha statesman, Nana Phadnavis, was born a few miles south of Bankot at Velas.



Kanhoji Angre

Nana Phadnavis



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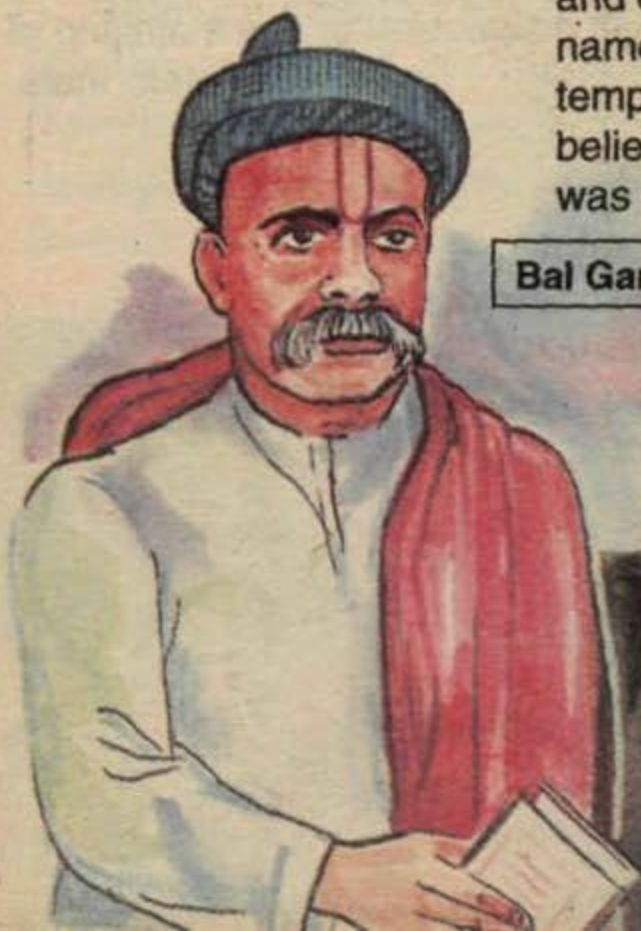


A port that flourished for centuries together in ancient times is Paripatana or Palaepatme. It lies south of Bankot and used to be the principal port of South Konkan from the 14th to the 16th centuries, when it carried on extensive trade with ports in the Mediterranean and in the Persian Gulf. The town was later named Dabhol after Dabhiya, a god who is believed to frequent forests. Dabhol's landmarks are a beautiful old mosque, which is the only existing example of pure Saracenic architecture in southern Konkan, and the underground Chandrikabu temple, that was built between AD 550 - 578.

It is at Dabhol that the American company ENRON is building a power project, which will supply the state with more electricity.

Further south on the picturesque Konkan coast is the seaside town of Ganapatipule. The entire town is covered with cashew, coconut, mango and casuarina trees. Ganapatipule, as its name suggests, has a famous Ganapati temple. The idol of Ganapati here, believed to have formed on its own, was discovered 400 years ago at the

Bal Gangadhar Tilak :





foot of a hillock. Thousands of pilgrims visit this temple, especially on Angaraki Chaturthi festival, when they fast the whole day, and break it at moon-rise, after offering the deity 'modak', a sweet made from rice flour, coconut and jaggery.

The sour, juicy fruit, kokam, grows in abundance here and all along the Konkan. The 'kokam sherbet', a drink made from the purplish fruit, is the main thirst-quencher of the Konkan. Once the juice has been extracted for making the sherbet, salt is added to the squeezed-out fruit, which is then dried in the sun for around ten days. The dried kokam is later used in the same way as tamarind to give a sour taste to curries.

Mangoes grow all over India, but Ratnagiri's Alphonso or 'Apuse' (as the locals call their favourite fruit), is regarded as the king of mangoes. Ratnagiri is a minor port. The most important monument here is the Lokmanya Tilak Memorial, the house where Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the country's foremost freedom fighters, was born on July 23, 1856.

Alphonso, 'King of Mangoes'

Vijayadurg, a strong sea fortress in the Konkan, lies a little to the south of Ratnagiri. Along with Sindhudurg, it served as the naval base of the Marathas. It was called Gheria till Shivaji changed its name to Vijayadurg. Except for its western wall, which is exposed to the fury of the sea, the fort is well-preserved.

The Vijayadurg Fort





Vade-Saguti

Several kilometres south lies Malwan, which was once a famous trading port. Today it is known for its salt pans and its cuisine. A Malwan meal is incomplete without 'Sol kadhi' (a dish made of kokam) and fish curry, made with plenty of coconut. The most popular Malwan meal, however, is 'Vade-Saguti', rice flour puris and a delicious meat gravy.

Just off the coast barely a kilometre away, lies Sindhudurg, a fort that Shivaji is said to have built with his own hands. Limestone slabs that bear Shivaji's hand and foot prints have been enshrined in small domes close to a temple which has an idol of the Maratha warrior. This is the only temple in the country dedicated to Shivaji. His idol is made of black stone. On special occasions the silver mask that covers his head, is replaced with one of gold.

The coastal town of Vengurla lies almost at the end of the Maharashtra coast, quite close to Goa. It was a trade settlement in the past, exporting coconuts, coir, molasses and cashewnuts. The town was attacked and plundered repeatedly between 1664 and 1812 by pirates who infested the coast. It was burnt to the ground twice by the Marathas and the Mughals.

Vengurla is a hilly town with long stretches of sand. Cashew, coconut, jackfruit and mango groves can be seen here. The Shri Devi Sateri temple and the Rameshwar Mandir are the two famous temples of Vengurla.

Idol of Shivaji



The Sindhudurg Fort

WANTED – SAINTS!



High up on the snow-clad mountains was a village. A long time ago, there lived two young men. Ever since their boyhood days, they had been very good friends, devoted to each other like two loving brothers. The world, selfish and full of pretensions, saddened their gentle hearts. Right from a tender age, both had set before them a noble goal, to follow the path of righteousness. Year after year they worked diligently to perfect themselves in the higher virtues, hoping some day to attain enlightenment.

Finally there came a time when the two companions not only mas-

tered the ancient and sacred lores but also acquired extraordinary powers. They could see things and hear sounds which were not visible and audible to the eyes and ears of others.

Indeed, both led a noble and selfless life and devoted their powers for the well-being and happiness of all. One would see them often hurrying through the bitter winter to attend to a poor ailing man. In fact, they skimmed over the ice at a speed far greater than the fastest of animals. All that they had to cover themselves in the frozen climate was a thin white





linen. Yet they remained warm. Sometimes they would go hungry in order to feed the famished, a hapless widow and her children, or a mendicant who had nothing to eat for days on end.

But never, even unwittingly, did they mention their kind deeds of mercy and the unusual powers they possessed. For, in their hearts there always burned the pure flame of true humility. So it was not before long that they came to be known among the people as great sages.

There came a time when the king wanted to appoint two ministers who would look into the well-

being of the people. But this important position, next in importance to that of the king himself, must go to one really worthy of it, a saintly person. So, the following announcement was made all over the small kingdom with the beating of drums.

"Hark O saintly ones, of this hilly land,

Come hither and gather in the palace grand,

Let us know what your heart does truly sing,

For on the morrow you may sit next to the king."

The following day, as the snow on the mountains tenderly flowed with the first rays of the rising sun, the king draped in his trailing robe sat on his throne in the open. Before him stood a sea of applicants for the honourable ministerial post. One after another they went up to him and to each of them the ruler put but a single question:

"Tell me, my good man, are you truly a saint?"

Each of the hopeful candidates gave him more or less the same answer: "Your Highness, in all humility I must say that indeed I am one!"

When the last of them had



passed before the throne, the king turned to his chamberlain, "Are there no more saints in my realm?"

"Your Highness," replied the chamberlain with a low bow, "there are two saintly persons deeply respected and adored by all."

"Then, why aren't they present here today?" asked the king.

"They have not come because they deny that they are saints!" replied the royal attendant.

"Have them brought to me at once!" ordered the ruler.

The two friends were soon conducted to the presence of the king.

"Why did you disobey my summons and fail to present yourselves before me along with the other saints?" sternly questioned the king.

The two men stood in silence with bowed heads. The first, slowly raising his eyes, said, "Your Highness, I'm not a saint."

"Are then the people of my kingdom fools to look upon you as one?"

"My lord, they are unaware of my faults and weaknesses," calmly replied the man.

"Ah! Then let us hear them all."

"Oh! They are so many and would only waste you precious time."



"Well, let us hear the most grievous of your faults."

"I give my word to do things for my fellowmen. But alas, most of the time I am unable to keep my promise, as I haven't got the means to fulfil them," he said and bowed gracefully.

The king smiled and then turned to his companion.

"Now, my good fellow, why didn't you present yourself before me?"

"I'm not a saint, my lord."

"Ha, ha, you seem to echo your companion! I suppose, you must surely be having many faults too!"



said the ruler with a chuckle.

"Oh, far more and still greater faults, than my companion's."

"Then, let's have the honour of hearing one of your monstrous faults!"

"Your Highness, I dream of doing good to others. But alas, my dreams remain as dreams only as I do not have the means to realise them," he said and bowed.

The king fell into a thoughtful silence. Then he slowly spoke with a sweet smile on his face. "Yes, both of you have great faults, very grievous faults indeed. As a penalty for such monstrous weaknesses, both of you have to take up

at once the duties of honourable ministers. You will be provided with all the means you require to keep your promises and fulfil your dreams."

"But Your Highness, we are not saints!" exclaimed the two friends together.

The king got up from his throne and coming down, bowed to the two companions.

"O men of wisdom, no true saint ever considers himself to be one. Therefore, you are indeed the two great sages of this little realm on the mountains," said the king and embraced them.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das





New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

A demoness gets 'moksha'

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "Oh King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite, as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Tell me, are you under the spell of any wizard? Or are you doing all this as per the advice of any *muni*? None of them will have guts to act on their own; they will only engage others to carry out an act on their behalf. I'm afraid you have fallen into some such trap. There's the example of





Ghoramukhi. Listen to her story." The vampire then began his narration.

Long, long ago, in the jungles of Dandaka lived a demoness named Ghoramukhi. Her favourite food was human beings. She did not spare anyone who strayed into the jungle. She would catch hold of the unfortunate prey and make a meal of him. One day, nobody came her way. She roamed the jungle in search of an easy prey when she saw someone sitting beneath a huge tree, in deep meditation. He was a muni called Gnanadeva.

The demoness approached him, but somehow she could not go anywhere near him. It was as if he

was encircled by flames, though he was himself unaffected by the fire.

Suddenly, the muni opened his eyes. "Hey, Ghoramukhi! Why should you continue to live like a demoness?" he admonished her. "You stop making human beings your food. Do you know it is Sivaratri tomorrow? You must meditate and chant the name of the Lord. Someone would come and give you holy water. And if you were to take it, you would be relieved of all your sins. And you would be released from your present life of a demoness."

It was a novel experience for Ghoramukhi. Suddenly, she lost her craving for human beings and was carried away by the muni's advice. She prostrated before him and said: "You've a kind heart, O sage! I shall abide by your advice." She then went back to her cave and contemplated how she could carry out the muni's suggestion, though her hunger was persisting.

Next day was Sivaratri. She saw that someone on a horseback was approaching her cave. She went and stood at the mouth of the cave. He dismounted and went up to Ghoramukhi. She asked him to stop. "Who're you?" Her loud query sounded like a thunderclap.

The man was scared. He began to shiver, as he remembered that he had



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Suddenly, the muni opened his eyes. "Hey, Ghoramukhi! Why should you continue to live like a demoness?" he admonished her. "You stop making human beings your food. Do you know it is Sivaratri tomorrow? You must meditate and chant the name of the Lord. Someone would come and give you holy water. And if you were to take it, you would be relieved of all your sins. And you would be released from your present life of a demoness."

It was a novel experience for Ghoramukhi. Suddenly, she lost her craving for human beings and was carried away by the muni's advice. She prostrated before him and said: "You've a kind heart, O sage! I shall abide by your advice." She then went back to her cave and contemplated how she could carry out the muni's suggestion, though her hunger was persisting.

Next day was Sivaratri. She saw that someone on a horseback was approaching her cave. She went and stood at the mouth of the cave. He dismounted and went up to Ghoramukhi. She asked him to stop. "Who're you?" Her loud query sounded like a thunderclap.

The man was scared. He began to shiver, as he remembered that he had

the jungle. "So, that's it! What you did was a heinous crime," she said. "The king let you go away, but don't think you can escape from me. You'll meet with your end soon!" Before long, she made a meal of him. Her hunger was even then not fully satiated, so she once again went up to the mouth of the cave and awaited another prey.

Soon came a young man. He looked quite handsome. She did not wait for him to approach her; she ran to him. "Stop!" she shouted. "Young man! Your end is near; today will be the last day of your life. Be prepared to become my food. I'm sure you'll taste delicious."

"What did you say, you woman?" he asked her nonchalantly. "Why should I stop?" he added, daringly.

The demoness laughed. Her laughter reverberated from the length and breadth of the jungle. "Who're you?" she asked him. "So you didn't understand when I asked you to stop? I've already eaten two like you, but I'm still hungry. I'll be appeased only if I eat you as well!"

The young man, too, was laughing all the while. "Oh, my name is Sunder," he replied. "If my body can be of some use to somebody, I'll be only too happy."

The demoness was now baffled.

No one had till then willingly offered his body. "Aren't you afraid of being killed?" she asked him, curiously.

"Why should I fear for my life?" responded Sunder. "Once born, one has to die some time or other. It's better to die and be food of another than die of any disease."

His daring made her doubt whether Sunder was not someone extraordinary. She caught hold of him. He looked a puny little thing when she held him in her palm.

But Sunder was calm. "Wait a moment, you woman!" he said. "My wife is unwell and is bedridden. I'm carrying the holy waters of the Ganga for her. If you are going to kill me, then I won't be able to give this holy water to her. So, let it be useful to you at least."

Ghoramukhi now took pity on Sunder. She put him back on the ground. "You're a great soul," she said and fell at his feet. The next moment she was freed of her existence on earth and she rose to the skies and disappeared.

The vampire concluded his narration there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! The muni Gnanadeva had advised Ghoramukhi to desist from killing and eating human beings on Sivaratri day, but to meditate and chant the name of



the Lord. He also told her that someone would give her holy water and she should drink it to get freed from the life of a demoness. But, she did not abide by any of these instructions. Instead, on Sivaratri day, she devoured two human beings. Sunder gave her 'gangajal' but she did not accept it, or drink it. Yet she got freedom from her existence as a demoness. How did this happen? If you know the answer, but deliberately refuse to reveal it to me, I may warn you, your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

The king had a ready answer: "The first man Ghoramukhi killed and ate was a dacoit, and he was a demon in human form. The second person was also not a human being, because he had the mind of a devil. He was willing to poison his master, the King of Kalinga. So, it was not any sin on the

part of Ghoramukhi for having killed the two of them. But Sunder was different. When he realised that he would not be alive to give the 'gangajal' to his wife, he was willing to spare it for the benefit of someone else. That showed his nobility. Being a young man, he could have wasted it on the ground before meeting with his end. So, Ghoramukhi thought he was even a shade better than the holy river itself. That's why she prostrated before him. And that act of hers was enough to get herself freed of her existence as a demoness. That's how she got her 'moksha'."

The vampire knew that Vikramaditya had once again outwitted him by giving him a convincing answer. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.





In the midst of all that we have seen as real, there is nothing so good as truthfulness.

—Thirukkural





Shrinking back from hatred will yield wealth; indulging
in its increase will hasten ruin.

THE POISONOUS FUMES FROM THE VESSEL CURES HIM OF HIS BLINDNESS!



I'M ABLE TO SEE! MY BLINDNESS IS GONE!!



MY GOD! WHAT'S THIS IN THE VESSEL?



THIS IS NOT FISH! IT'S A SNAKE!



AH! SOMEONE WANTS TO KILL ME... LET ME WAIT AND SEE



AFTER SOME TIME, THE PRINCESS AND THE HUNCHBACK RETURN HOME.



HAVE YOU COOKED THE FISH AND FED YOUR HUSBAND?

IT'S NOT YET READY. HE'S STILL STIRRING.



THE BLIND MAN GETS UP! YOU, DIRTY SWINE! SO THIS IS HOW YOU WANTED TO GET RID OF ME!



WHAT'RE YOU SAYING? I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

REALLY?... I THINK YOU NEED THIS, THEN!

PLEASE... WAIT PLEASE!



A man's true manliness consists in making himself the head and benefactor of his family.

THE WHEEL-BEARER CONCLUDES THE STORY THUS...



THE HUSBAND, IN UTTER RAGE, HIT THE HUNCH-BACK WITH A CLUB. WITH THAT BLOW HIS HUNCH DISAPPEARED!

AND THEN HIT HIS WIFE ON HER FOREHEAD AND THE HORN FELL DOWN.



AND THEREAFTER, THE PENITENT PRINCESS AND HUSBAND LIVED HAPPILY TOGETHER.



WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, BUT NEVER RELY ON FATE ALONE. ACT WITH WISDOM.



AND, MY DEAR FRIEND, DESIST FROM EXCESSIVE GREED.



PLEASE, DON'T LEAVE ME.



VISHNU SHARMA CONCLUDES THE FIFTH AND FINAL PART OF "PANCHATANTRA" CALLED "ASAMPREKSHYA KARITWA" THUS.



ILL-CONSIDERED ACTION RESULTS IN PERILS AND SUFFERING.

LISTEN TO ADVICE, BUT WEIGH THE PROS AND CONS, AND ACT WISELY, MY DEAR PRINCES.



WE'VE COME TO THE END OF PANCHATANTRA AND I SHALL RECOLLECT IN BRIEF WHAT IT HAS TAUGHT YOU.



The defects of the noble will be observed as clearly as the dark spots in the moon.



Thy name is IDIOT!

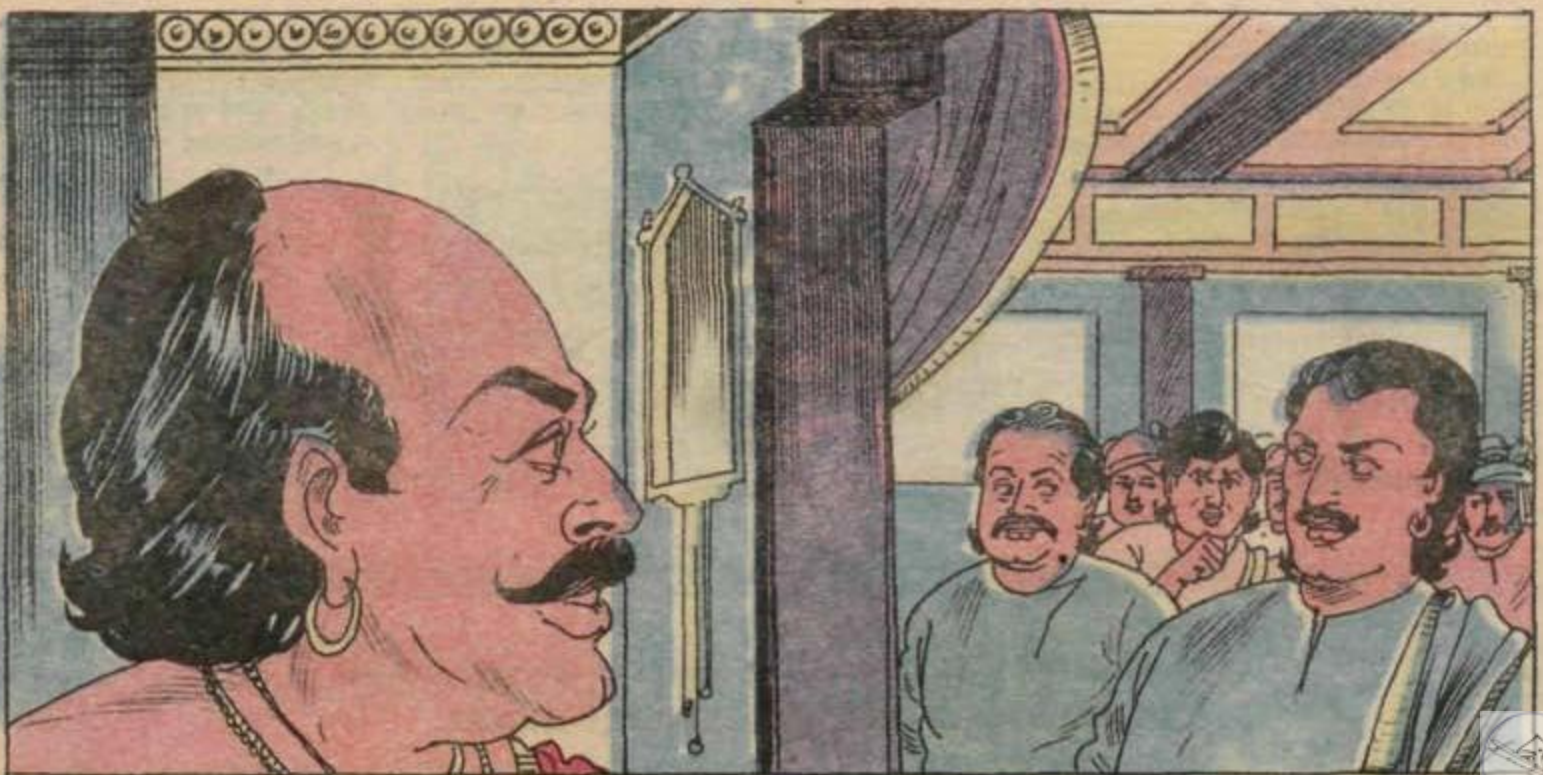
Annamalai was a prominent merchant of Anandapur. He did roaring business, which needed the services of quite a few accountants and clerks. One of them was Ganesh. While everybody promptly waited for their salary and spent their time in chatting, Ganesh alone carried out his job diligently and punctually. Whenever he found spare time, he would even complete the work of others who would be merely wasting their time. Annamalai was aware of this.

One day he was so disgusted that he burst out: "There are quite a few people here who do nothing except chatting. If I see them again indulging in wasting time, I shall give them a title and call them IDIOTS."

Some of them felt ashamed and mended their ways. But two or three of them persisted in chatting with each other whenever their master was not noticing. Ganesh still obliged them by doing their share of the work. Annamalai one day pulled him up. "You're an IDIOT!"

Ganesh wondered what he meant by that, as he never neglected his work. He waited for an explanation. "You're doing the work of others!" said the zamindar.

Ganesh now understood. "Sir, henceforth I won't undertake the work of others here," he assured Annamalai. "I shall confine myself to my work."



NEWS FLASH

Tree weds tree

How could that happen? you must have chuckled when you read the heading. But such a wedding did take place in January in a place called Malakkulam, in Palghat district of Kerala. To begin at the beginning, we have to go back 13 years, when two friends—Kelan, a farmer, and Velappan, a headmaster—planted two saplings, of a banyan and a neem. Just as friends sometimes wish that their son and daughter got married to each other when they grew up, these two friends also decided that they would perform the 'marriage' of the trees when they reached adulthood. For trees, it is 13 years, and the two friends tended the growing trees with love and care, just as they would have if they had been blessed with children. Sad to say, Velappan, died a few years ago. But Kelan remembered his promise. When the banyan planted by Velappan grew, Kelan had a platform put up around the tree. While the banyan is associated with Lord Siva, the neem is believed to have been Renuka—mother of Parasurama—in its previous birth. So, the two trees in Malakkulam came to be venerated by the people there. Naturally, they were horrified when someone suggested cutting them down to make way for a waiting shed. They protested, and went a step further in arranging their marriage. The trees were decorated, floral patterns were made in front of them with colour powder, the local priest carried out a puja, and a gold necklace was ceremoniously tied around the neem. Kelan watched all this with the satisfaction of having kept his word. There were nearly 400 people to partake of the wedding feast. Shall we say, the banyan and neem "lived happily there after"?

Poor man's vehicle

That was how the bicycle was called some thirty or forty years ago, when few people could afford a motor car or a motorbike. Then came the age of scooters, which originated in Italy. Soon followed 'small cars' and 'people's cars', which were available at affordable prices. However, the popularity of bicycles only increased, with the production figures steadily going up since the 1970's. In 1994, the world production stood at 110,000,000. Of this, China's contribution was 43,000,000. India took the second place, though the percentage (ten) of increase that year was better than China's five per cent. One reason for this spurt in

production was the demand for a vehicle that could go faster on a street or a road choked with motor vehicles. In several countries, these vehicles are not allowed inside the campuses of universities, huge factories, and similar institutions. For example, inside the sprawling NASA complex, from where space missions go up, movement from one building to another is only by bicycle. In 400 U.S. cities, police use bicycles for patrol duty. In the state of Florida, most cities have provided bicycles to their postmen. In India, the maximum number of bicycle users are found in Pune, Hyderabad, and Delhi-New Delhi.



No exemption

Somu, Ramu, and Paramu were thick friends. They studied Medicine and began private practice together. It was decided that they would take three rupees as fees from every patient whichever doctor attended on him or her. It was agreed that they would have a share of one rupee each every time a patient paid the fees.

One day, a lady came in complaining of severe headache. She was Somu's wife, Ambujam. "Could you give me some medicine?" she asked her husband.

"Please pay three rupees as fees," said Ramu. "Only then will you get any medicine."

"But I'm Dr. Somu's wife!" the woman protested. "Do I, too, have to pay fees?"

"Of course!" insisted Ramu. She then gave him the money and Ramu handed her the medicine.

She went to her husband and complained. He pacified her: "If we were to give you free medicine, then we may have to extend the same privilege to the families and friends of Ramu and Paramu as well. That'll become a bad practice and it will affect this institution. Today, we took money from you. Tomorrow we can take money from their people also. Don't feel that you have lost three rupees. You've only contributed it to this institution."

Ambujam was convinced. Half the headache was gone by the time she reached home.





Choosing a husband

Mathangi was the Princess of Mangalpuri. She was very beautiful to look at. However, even when she grew up, she did not leave her childishness. She would do whatever she liked, as she wished to remain active, always. When she had nothing else to do, she would tell her parents that she was visiting the temple, but she would really repair to the forest, instead! She liked to roam, enjoying nature in its pristine glory. She was encouraged in all her activities by her favourite maid, Vimala, who was with her always.

The king and queen would not approve of her wanderings, but they did not object either. After all, she was never alone, as she would be accompanied by her maid. Moreover, she was now grown up and should be taking some interest in the kingdom and the people. She would have an opportunity to meet many of them in

the course of her wanderings.

Mathangi was also daring. Inside the forest, on a hillock, was an old fort. "One day, we must explore the place," she used to tell Vimala, who would caution her. "Should we? We don't know who's inside, or what's going on there. We should not get into trouble." The princess would think for a while and say, "All right. We won't go there today."

The king and queen realised that the time had come to give her in marriage. She should now shed her childishness and pranks and begin thinking of more serious things. They planned to marry her off to a suitable prince. Their enquiries resulted in choosing Gunasekhar of Suvarnagiri for Mathangi, who somehow or other did not approve of their choice. "What special trait do you find in his character?" she asked them.

"Darling, he had his education in a



gurukula and has acquired knowledge of many things," they tried to convince her. "Besides, he's sure to take over as the King of Suvarnagiri."

"But, most princes these days are educated in *gurukulas* and ashrams where they acquire a lot of knowledge," remarked Mathangi. "All right. I shall wed whoever answers my three questions, who can walk on fire and water, and who can fly in the sky like a bird. A person capable of doing all these things will win my hand, and none else." It was now evident that she had clear-cut ideas about marriage and her prospective husband. She did not want to concede

that others, too, would have some views and she could accept them. She had definite opinions and she would expect everybody to accept them or agree to them.

The king and queen were in a dilemma. "We don't understand what you're saying, Mathangi!" said the king.

"Can anybody walk on fire and water or fly like a bird?" queried her mother. "You keep your views to yourself. We've decided to send you along with Prince Gunasekhar."

The king and queen did not waste time. They invited the prince over to their kingdom and arranged for his stay in a palatial building with all comforts. Preparations began for conducting the wedding ceremony in the next two or three days. For the first time, a decision was taken against the wishes of Mathangi, who could not brook it. Her pride was hurt, but she kept silent. She was secretly planning her next move.

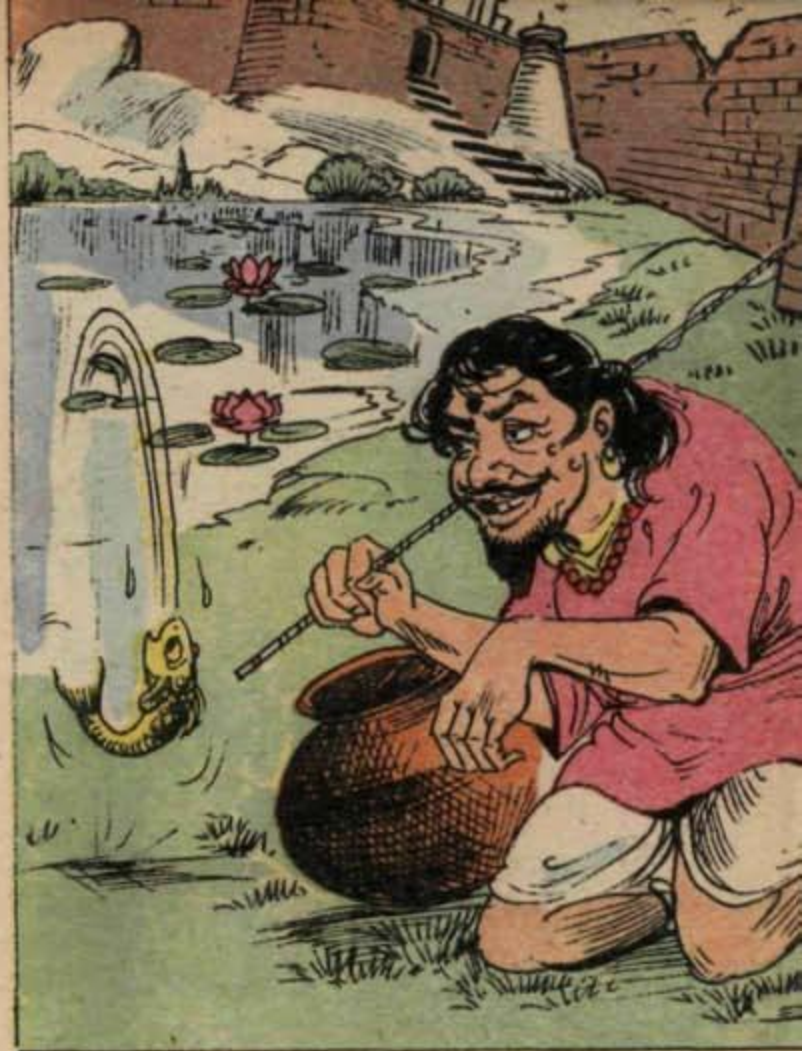
Suddenly Mathangi was missing! Where was the princess? worried the king and queen. They sent search parties everywhere. Vimala was very upset, because the princess did not confide in her. She remembered the fort in ruins inside the forest. Mathangi was keen on exploring the place

Would she have gone there? Without telling anyone, she left for the forest in the hope that she would find her and escort her to the wedding hall, as the princess's favourite maid.

By the time Vimala reached the fort, it was nearing dusk. She found the door of the fort shut. She peeped through an opening on the door. What she saw inside gave her a shock. There was a huge pond. A man looking dirty all over, wearing torn clothes and an unkempt hair, was sitting by the side of the pond and angling for fish. He had a hunch and he was of dark complexion. On the whole, he was uncouth to look at. What shocked Vimala most was, Mathangi was standing by his side, and shedding tears. At last she had traced the princess, but why should she be crying? Was she in some deep trouble? She and the man were talking and the maid strained her ears to listen to what they were saying.

The man was telling Mathangi, "Look here, you better marry me, otherwise I shall turn you into a fish! And then I'll fry and eat you!"

To which Mathangi was replying, "I'm expected to become the wife of the Prince of Suvarnagiri. It was my foolishness that brought me here. How could I marry an old man like



you?" And she began to shed copious tears..

The man persisted. "Don't talk nonsense! I shall give you two days to take a decision!" He then hit her on the head with the angling rod. The next moment, she turned into a fish. The man put the fish into a pot lying near him and closed it with a lid.

By now it was pitch dark. He lit a torch, with the help of which Vimala could watch his movements. She knocked on the door loudly. "Who is it?" the man asked, as he went and opened the door.

Vimala posed as if she was shivering from head to foot. "I was pass-



ing this way and I found I could not proceed further as it is quite dark. If you would allow me, I shall spend the night here and shall leave this place tomorrow early morning."

"Generally, everybody runs away on seeing me," the man said. "How come you aren't afraid of me but speak to me kindly? You are even seeking my permission to stay here! When a beautiful girl like you makes such a request, how can I refuse? Come in."

Vimala went inside. The man closed the door. "Wait! I need better light to enjoy your beauty. Let me go and lit another torch." He moved to

another room a little away.

When he was at a safe distance, Vimala removed the lid of the pot and said : "O Princess! I'm Vimala. I've come here to rescue you. Don't worry!" By then, she saw the man returning. She immediately closed the pot and went back to the entrance.

The man had another torch in his hand. In the bright light, they saw each other well. "Even at this age, you look so handsome!" Vimala complimented him. "How would you have looked seventy years ago?"

The man felt flattered. He jumped for joy. "You mean to say that I am even now handsome? If you really like me, why don't you marry me?"

"I'm so happy!" responded Vimala. "But don't you think we should go elsewhere to get married? Who knows when robbers and dacoits would not attack this fort?" She once again posed as if she was trembling with fear.

"No fears! No robber, no dacoit will dare come here!" the man assured her. "You've no idea of my power and strength. I know enough magic to raise this fort to the skies and fly it." He paused for a moment. "Why did you mention robbers and dacoits? Are you carrying anything precious?"

Vimala showed him her ring. "This is a diamond ring. Nothing ordinary. A yogi had visited us and he gave it to me after blessing me. When I wear it, whoever stands in front of me will do as I command. It can even change the mind of human beings. It has that kind of power."

The man was really attracted by the ring. He stood staring at the ring on Vimala's finger. "I was cherishing a desire to become the ruler of a kingdom. I could find only one way to achieve my ambition. And that was by marrying a princess. I got a golden opportunity. I have a princess here in this pot as a fish. See whether you can make her agree to marry me with the help of your ring." He then touched the fish with the angling rod.

The next moment the fish disappeared and in its place stood Mathangi. Vimala drew out her ring, held it in front of Mathangi and said: "Hrim! Hram! Yes, she is a real princess." She looked as if she was surprised. She turned to Mathangi. "Though this man looks old he's a good person. O Princess! Are you willing to marry him?" She winked at her, as if to give her a signal.

"I'm willing," said Mathangi.

The man jumped for joy. He



jumped and jumped and could not control himself. He fell down and the angling rod fell off his hands. Before he could get up and catch hold of the rod, Vimala grabbed it and knocked on the man's head with it. In a jiffy, he turned into a fish. Vimala pushed it into the pond.

Mathangi's joy knew no bounds. She hugged her maid. "How easily could you save me!"

Vimala's eyes welled with tears of joy. "All right, Mathangi, let's rush to the palace. We've no time to lose. You must get ready for the wedding. And I've a surprise for you."

When the king and queen saw the





princess and her maid coming, they could not believe their eyes. Prince Gunasekhar too was surprised. Mathangi narrated her adventure and how Vimala had rescued her. "I wished for some unique qualities for my husband. That's why I underwent all this trial. I shall forget all that. I'm willing to marry whoever you've chosen."

"But I am not marrying *you*, Mathangi," said Gunasekhar. "I've found some special qualities in Vimala. I wish to marry her."

Mathangi was not upset by this change of mind on the part of Gunasekhar. "That's quite fair, O Prince!" She went and took Vimala's hands in hers and congratulated her. "Let my parents find another bridegroom for me."

Just as Mathangi had wished, Vimala's marriage with Prince Gunasekhar was performed by the king and queen with pomp and splendour. Mathangi could be seen all over the place with a smile on her lips.

- God is but truth, and all virtues follow truth.
- Awe comes from those who fear.
- Evil is wrought by want of thought.

SPORTS

yesterday
today
tomorrow

Torch and terrorism

The Atlanta Olympic Games is less than six months away. The Olympic torch to be lit ceremoniously in Olympia, in Greece, will cover 10,000 miles in 84 days before it reaches Atlanta. Bill Matman, who was in charge of the torch route for the 1984 Los Angeles Games, recalls how the sense of patriotism among the U.S. citizens went a long way in ensuring its safe passage to the Games city. But things have changed very much in the last 12 years. Syd Miles, Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, State of Georgia, is spending anxious hours, as it is his Department which has been given the charge of the torch within the U.S.A. this time. The anxiety is compounded with the fact that terrorism every now and then has been raising its ugly head in cities like Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York lying on the route of the torch. It will be a shame if the passage of the torch is hindered by any terrorist activity.

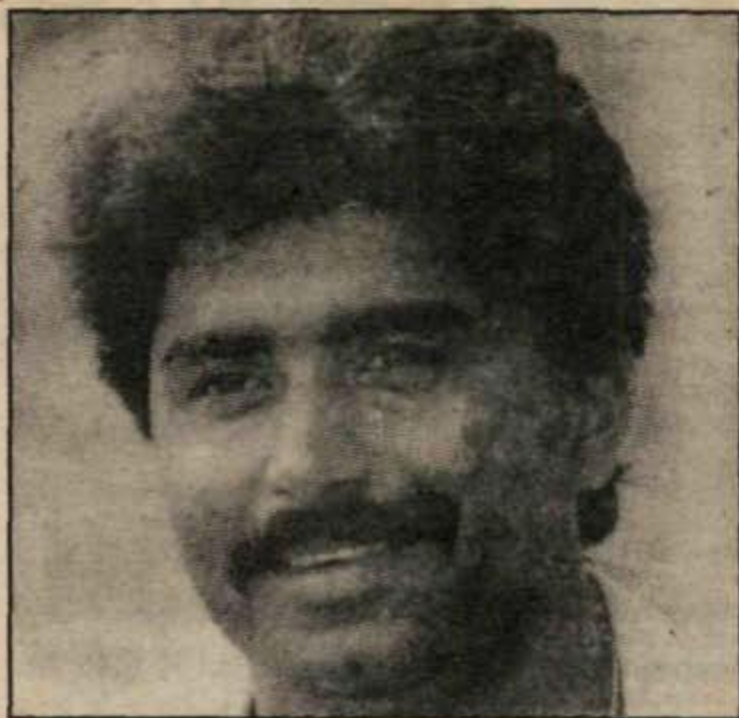
Debut

For the first time, yes, not by a player, but by the 'walkie-talkie. Date: February 14; venue: Ahmedabad; occasion: Opening match of the 1996 World Cup between England and New Zealand. The New Zealand opener edged a ball, which went past the wicket-keeper. Fielder Alec Stewart ran after the ball to stop it before

it touched the fence. The umpire waited for the signal, which did not come for a long time. He pulled out his walkie-talkie and spoke into it, and in reply heard "four". As one sports reporter describes: Cricket had crossed a boundary!

Sixth time

Pakistan will play their first match in the 1996 World Cup on February 24 against the U.A.E. at Gujranwala in Pakistan. While it will be the first ever



one-dayer for U.A.E., it will be the sixth time for Pakistan's Javed Miandad, who will be the only player ever to play in all six World Cups. In fact, he had not been playing First class cricket for the last two years. He has till now played in 228 one-day matches – a figure excelled only by Alan Border and Desmond Haynes. The 'next best' distinction is held by another Pakistan player – Imran Khan, who has played in all the earlier five World Cups. However, he is not a member of the Pakistan team this year.



The Other Side

The Zamindar of Sivapuri called his Dewan and ordered: "Go round the country and find out how our people are faring. You've also to collect taxes."

For several months, the Zamindar himself had not been able to visit the villages under him, as he once used to. And it was at that time people went to him and paid their dues. Of late he had been kept busy and as he did not step out, the dues from the people fell into arrear. That was the reason why he thought of sending the Dewan.

The Dewan, accompanied by a clerk and a servant, started for the villages. He found that the people led a happy and contented life. They willingly paid their taxes. However, in one village called Mantharapura, the Dewan found the people very simple. They were not only not literate, but were not aware of what they

could rightfully demand and get and what they were expected to give in return.

The day the Dewan returned, the Zamindar had a visitor, a *muni* called Vivekmurthi. The Dewan reported to the Zamindar all that he saw, noticed, and heard, and then handed to him the money he had collected from the people. He had a special word about Mantharapura. "The people have no knowledge of anything. They have no idea of the world outside their village."

"The reason for their ignorance is," remarked the muni, "they don't have the thinking power. Nobody asks them any questions. They don't know how to argue. If only they get an opportunity to do all these, then they will be aware of what is happening around them. They will no longer be dependent on others for everything."

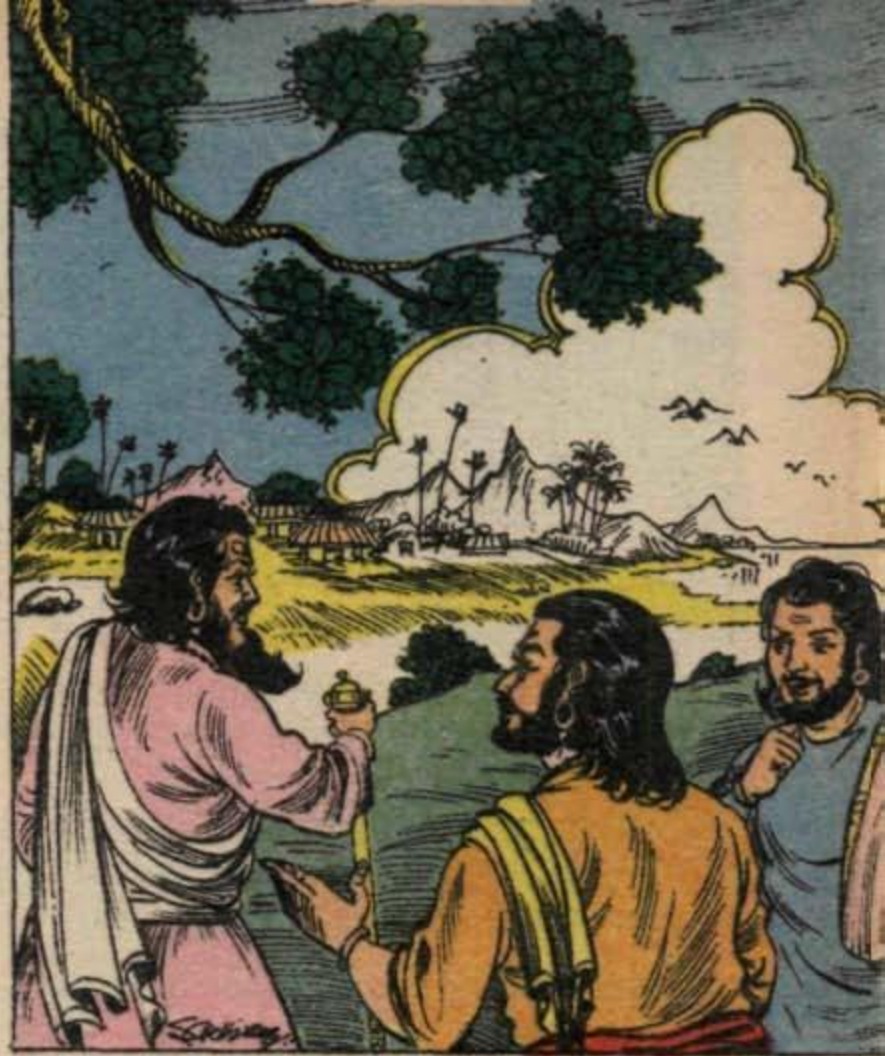
The Zamindar was not convinced. "Sire, is that practical?"

"Why not?" said Vivekmurthi, and offered his help. "You send along with me one of your men who can show me that village. I shall take two of my disciples and give the people whatever knowledge they need and make it a model village."

The Zamindar was happy. He promised all help to the muni. A few days later, Vivekmurthi and disciples reached Mantharapura village. It was a beautiful place on the sea coast. The muni and his disciples were extremely happy when they saw the scenic beauty. But alas! when they talked to the villagers, they soon found how ignorant they were.

The muni heard them. "Do you think that the Dewan was exaggerating things?" he asked them. "Spread word that I shall be giving a discourse in the evening beneath the banyan tree on the bank of the river."

The disciples went round the village, entered every house and informed the people about the discourse. The villagers were quite excited. They started for the discourse very early and went in large batches, eager to listen to the great saint who had descended on the village. When Vivekmurthi reached the place, he



was happy to see a very large crowd. He went and sat on a tall piece of rock, so that he could see everybody and everybody in the congregation could see him as well.

One of the disciples went up to him and whispered into his ear. "Many of them appear to be rowdies and strong men," and expressed his apprehension. "Suppose they don't appreciate what we tell them, I'm afraid, they may even harm us. So, please remember to be apologetic at the end."

The muni listened to him with a smile. He then started his lecture. "Of all creations on this earth, the human being, man, is exceptional. He has the



capacity to forgive and forget. That is the greatest asset in him." This he explained and elaborated through stories, incidents and anecdotes.

One among the crowd stood up. The muni signalled to him to speak. "Once a thief entered my house," he said, "and I caught him. But I didn't beat him or hurt him in any manner. I knew how he was driven to commit a crime, so I forgave him, and allowed him to go. O revered swamiji, don't you think my action was correct?" Before the muni could give him a reply, the audience hailed his action. He sat down, much pleased with himself.

This encouraged another person to stand up and narrate his own experience. "One day, a thief entered my house also. I caught him but did not punish him. I didn't even admonish him. I asked him to keep whatever he had stolen, thinking that he was a

needy person. Won't you approve of my action?" he asked the muni.

Now, a third person stood up and said, "Sire, a thief entered my house also. Before he could steal anything, I caught him and asked him what items he wanted. And I gave him all those things and asked him to go back home. O revered swami! Don't you think what I did to the thief deserves a better appreciation?"

Vivekmurthi listened to all of them. "You've all been quite understanding, patient, and kind-hearted," he observed. "But what has impressed me more is the gentlemanly behaviour of the three thieves. They did not do any harm to anyone of you and quietly went away from your house. That's something unusual or not very common."

The three men realised that they had failed to understand the significance of that aspect of the thieves' behaviour.





Which are the 18 languages recognised in the Indian constitution?

—Mohammed Khalil, Deorashtra

Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and Sindhi, to which were added Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali in 1991.

I want to know why we "see" dreams only while we are sleeping. Do dreams come true? Do dreams affect our life?

—Jatindra Singh, Sundargarh

A dream is an imaginary event or a series of events that you experience in your mind while you are asleep. When you are awake and active, you can only "dream" of a situation which you would very much wish to happen, but which you are almost certain would not possibly take place. Such an experience is lightly called day-dreaming! Yes, dreams can come true, but not all of them, because they are all imaginary. Dreams can certainly guide your actions.

FROM OUR READERS

Your magazine is doing great service to those who are interested in developing their lexical skills, and considering this, I have started buying it for my daughter.

—Manoj Dixit, Ghaziabad

The pull-out 'Forts of India', was very useful to me. Your new pull-out 'Coastal Journey' is holding good. Your new serial on Ashoka is indeed very good, as it gives much information about ancient history. I very much liked the feature "Children in the News" in the February issue.

—Kumar Nityanand, Pune

I am proud to read *Chandamama*. It inspires me a lot from the stories as well as News Flash. I am very much impressed with the recent issues, because you provide amazing stories. I shall be happy if you publish Christian stories from the Bible. I hope to see them soon.

—L.K. Kez Rengma, Dimapur, Nagaland



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